

Merton Council Council

5 February 2020

Supplementary Agenda 5

Public and Councillor Supplementary Questions and Replies

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1. From: David Reeves

To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport

Has Merton Council been asked by the Home Office (or other Government agency) to provide data on rough sleepers in the Borough pursuant to the Rough Sleeper Support Service or any other government scheme? If so, has Merton Council taken steps to provide any such data?

Reply

The Council has not been asked by the Home Office (or other Government Agency) to provide data of rough sleepers.

2. From: Louise Cole

To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration Housing and Transport

To address the severe decline in UK swift numbers, will Merton Council follow other London boroughs, and policy guidelines: 2019 NPPF Section 15, NPPG Natural Environment, and The Mayor's draft London Plan Clause G6 (B4), and include artificial nest sites for swifts in planning conditions and its new housing stock?

Reply

The Council recognises the importance of nature conservation and has adopted policies to ensure wildlife is considered when making planning decisions. Each planning application is determined on its merits and each application may offer different ways to encourage wildlife and nature conservation and mitigate any harm. Swift boxes may well be appropriate for many such cases given the decline demonstrated in recent years. This may not be appropriate in every case but will be encouraged accordingly.

3. From: Kevin Clarke

To the Cabinet Member for Schools and Adult Education

Is council confident there will be enough secondary school places for 2021 entry such that no child will be expected to take a place in a religious school against their will?

Reply

The council has been careful to ensure that there are enough secondary school places in the borough without creating too many spare places and therefore impacting adversely on the finances of existing Good and Outstanding schools. In recent years we have therefore expanded Harris Academy Merton and facilitated the opening of the new school Harris Academy Wimbledon in the area of greatest

demand. Demand is expect to remain at relatively similar levels for the next 3 years. We expect to ensure that there will be a secondary school place for everyone that needs it again for this September without further expansion and we expect to do so again for 2021. However, the position will continue to be closely monitored. To ensure they obtain a preference offer of a school place, parents are advised to ensure they read and follow the “Guide to applying for a secondary school place” which is on the council’s website.

**4. From: John O’Sullivan
To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport**

In Arthur Road some rainwater drains are blocked. The pavement is uneven, cracked & has holes in places. The road was resurfaced though mainly used for through traffic. The pavements are used by council tax payers. Why is there no proper maintenance?

Reply

London Borough of Merton (Merton) undertakes a system of regular highway safety inspections of all its adopted highways in order to comply with its statutory duty to maintain highways in accordance with Section 41 of the Highways Act 1980. Safety inspections are designed to identify defects that meets the Council intervention criteria. The risk of danger is identified by a highways officer on site, and if a defect meets the intervention criteria this is categorised in terms of an appropriate priority response. Arthur Road is on a monthly inspection regime and was last inspected by the highway officer on the 15th January 2020 where he identified one defect on the footway (outside no. 33). This was passed across to our term maintenance contractor to repair within 28 days for issuing.

With regards to gullies within Arthur Road, there is a schedule of works that has been programme for all gullies within Arthur Road to be inspected and cleaned within the next 2 months. If you are aware of any known blocked gullies, please feel free to report these via this web address <https://www.merton.gov.uk/streets-parking-transport/street-cleaning/drain-and-sewer-problems> if you haven’t already.

In addition, to determine roads for inclusion in our annual footway reconstruction each year the council uses a robust prioritisation model. This model benchmarks and ranks all roads in the borough in comparison to each other and considers a range of criteria such as Engineers Assessment, Condition Survey results, Road Classification, Safety Inspector Priority, Reactive Maintenance Expenditure, Traffic Volumes, Population Density, Emergency, Bus and Cycle routes, Traffic Generators (schools & hospitals etc), Ward Deprivation and Complaints Received. The information used in this model is reviewed and updated annually at the time that the programmes are developed to ensure that the most current picture of the network is taken into account. According to the current output from this model used to prepare the 2019/20 footway reconstruction programme, Arthur Road is ranked 124th out of 1167 roads in the borough, indicating that its condition is below average for the borough. With the council’s current levels of funding for planned maintenance, it only allows for 10 – 15 roads to be reconstructed per year, therefore, it appears unlikely that Arthur Road may

form part of the Councils footway reconstruction programme within the next few years. However, this is subject to change as the model is reviewed annually and the possibility that footway's deteriorate at different rates. Just for information, we are currently populating the raw data that has been collated and importing this data into our prioritisation model so we should have a proposed maintenance programme of works for 2020/21 around mid-February 2020.

In the meantime, the Council will continue to inspect Arthur Road to ensure it's maintained in a safe condition and is considered for inclusion in the council's future maintenance programmes.

**5. From: Nicola Mills
To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport**

Building works began at a private school in Wimbledon (Willington School) prior to proposed works that needed Planning Committee approval. Photographs were submitted to Merton Council but not answered. Why are Merton Council not taking action in these situations? This is a worrying precedent to our planning process.

Reply

Planning permission is not always required for building works. It depends what works were undertaken at that particular time. The Council's enforcement records reveal that there are 3 investigations underway. For any action to be instigated requires evidence that harm results and the council are not aware of specific harm from the initiation of the building works. A site visit was undertaken on 27 Jan 2019 where it appeared that the vast majority of the building works were underway and it is considered that there were no issues apparent that would require formal enforcement action being instigated at this time. Complainants details are always remain confidential.

**6. From: Joachim Tolle
To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport**

Pavement access recently closed to the public for weeks, unauthorised by Willington School contractors. Vulnerable people expected to cross the busy road (young school children, those with mobility restrictions, elderly, mothers with prams). Concerns were lodged with Merton Council but unanswered. Why Merton Council allowing builders to do this?

Reply

We have contacted Willington School contractors today (29-01-20), to advise them of the duties and to inform them that they can't close the footway without having a temporary traffic order in place and also without prior engagement/agreement with council officers. The only temporary traffic order that was made for any of the works undertaken within the school, was the recent crane operation that was undertaken in October 2019. Moving forward, the highway officer for the area will be visiting site on a regular basis to ensure that the footpath outside the school isn't closed unlawfully.

**7. From: Tony Burton
To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport**

To ask when Merton Council will complete the Borough character studies as part of the essential evidence base for the new Local Plan?

Reply

We are working on a wide variety of evidence for the Local Plan. At this time we aren't proposing to complete the final borough character study areas due to the wealth of design and conservation guidance published by the Mayor of London, organisations that champion design and Merton Council, and due to prioritising valuable resources to complete the Local Plan.

**8. From: Klaartje Dresselaers
To the Cabinet Member for Women and Equalities**

Is the ethnic make-up of Merton council employees reflective of the diversity of the population of the borough, and if not, what is the council doing to improve diversity amongst its employees?

Reply

The Statistics show:

	Merton Population	Council Staff	Council Managers	Merton Councillors
White	63.2%	55.4%	70.9%	69.2%
BAME	36.8%	33.1%	11.4%	28.2%
No Data		11.5%	17.7%	2.6%

Please note that the following:

- The data sources differ in methodology and content, therefore providing at best an indication of the differences between the demographic of the resident population, council staff and managers and councillors. The Merton population for instance will contain individuals who are not eligible to work.
- The Council's workforce is drawn from a wide geographical area including and beyond Merton itself. The provision of data by staff, other than age is optional.

Action being taken by Merton Council to improve its BAME make up includes, but is not limited to:

- Appropriate recruitment and selection training for Manager, which includes unconscious bias
- The Chair of the selection panel will ensure any panel members have been appropriately trained
- Career Pathways are being progressed to encourage and enable staff to progress internally
- Agencies are required to demonstrate their track record in producing BAME candidates and the number of successful BAME appointments
- We run a diversity and cultural awareness programme for staff
- External recruiters are asked to conduct additional searches in order to be able to attract BAME candidates
- We are currently looking, where possible, introducing diversity in panel representation for senior appointments which may include stakeholders
- Staff are frequently asked to update their personal data on our HR system in order that our monitoring can be 100% accurate but as it is not legally mandatory then staff continue to have the option to say “prefer not to say”
- Flexible working options are available to help attract candidates, including term time only working, flexible start and finish times, condensed working weeks etc
- We can monitor all stages of the recruitment process and where candidates have indicated their ethnicity we can monitor the % of BAME candidates who apply, long listed, short listed and successful appointment

**9. From: Samantha MacArthur
To the Cabinet Member for Finance**

What are the average and maximum wait times for residents' phone calls to Merton Council to be answered?

Reply

The following information about average wait times is for all calls to 4901, the main switchboard number, that have been answered by an operator for the month on Jan 2020 (up to around mid-day 31/1/2020):

Total number of calls 5642

The average (mean) wait time was 55 secs

There is technically no maximum wait time for calls (i.e. we do not cut off callers after a set period).

**10. From: Shipra Gupta
To the Cabinet Member for Finance**

Last November the Council stated that there had been no formal discussion about committing to become accredited with the Living Wage Foundation. Can the council please provide an update on what discussions have taken place since then?

Reply

All of our employees, including apprentices are paid the London Living Wage so there have been no recent discussions.

11. From: John Braithwaite To the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Health and the Environment

When is leaf clearance scheduled and is particular attention being given to designated cycle routes. With autumn being wet, the leaves turn to mulch which as well as being slippery also makes it much harder to clear.

Reply

Our service provider, Veolia provides additional capacity to collect and dispose of leaves during the autumn and winter season. This 'leafing season' runs for ten weeks, starting from a council agreed date between, typically between October and November, and finishing in December/January. Exact dates are flexible due to the seasonal factors that can affect leaf fall.

This year due to the relatively mild weather we experienced this autumn, we delayed the start of the service until the middle of November.

Our leafing plan comprises road assets that historically have experienced heavy leaf fall or have been prone to flooding in adverse weather conditions. The plan allows for two visits across the ten-week period by the leafing resource to each of the roads outlined in the plan. The leafing schedule is neither exclusive nor exhaustive and other locations will be cleared as required including designated cycle paths if required.

The outcome of each year is factored into the plan and additional assets are added as the street scene changes or as the team is made aware of further need. In addition to the programme, roads and footways continue to be cleansed on the normal cleansing schedule.

12. From: Tom Killick To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport

For planning applications approved in the last 12 months for housing developments of 10 units or more, how many units in total do these applications provide, and how many of those will be "affordable"?

Reply

Merton's authority monitoring report (AMR) summarises the changes that happen in Merton from planning applications and construction of new homes, businesses and other developments. <https://www.merton.gov.uk/planning-and-buildings/planning/local-plan#titleCol20> Chapter 4 of Merton's most recent authority

monitoring report summarises how many new homes, including affordable homes are approved and built. Merton's AMR 2018-19 will be published in February 2020.

**13. From: Emlyn Williams
To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport**

What has Merton council done to support private sector renters, including information on the website and drop in sessions for residents?

Reply

The Council supports tenants living in the private rented sector in a number of ways which includes providing appropriate advice and assistance on a range of tenancy related issues including security of tenure, harassment and illegal eviction, rent controls etc. The team also supports tenants by working with their landlords to improve housing conditions in their homes and where Landlords are non-compliant in dealing with repairs appropriate enforcement action is taken. This service is provided by the housing options team and the housing enforcement service. The service provides a duty officer on a daily basis located in the Civic Centre and a telephone service throughout the working week between the hours 9 to 5.

There are numerous pages on the council's website on private tenants' rights

**14. From: Somayeh Aghnianejad
To the Cabinet Member for Finance**

How many administrative tasks are not available for residents to do online currently (e.g. renewing residents parking permits) and can only be done by phone, and when does Merton council anticipate that residents will be able to carry out all these tasks online?

Reply

We have automated over 200 different transactions/service requests. We have focused to date largely on those that are most used by customers, for example within our waste service.

Requests from 'apps' such as Fix My Street and Love Clean Streets continue to be accepted and processed through the relevant service areas to ensure customers can use them, although the most efficient reporting method is to contact the council directly.

From 14 January, you are now able to renew your permit on line. You can use an e-permit immediately after you buy it, as it is not printed or posted to you. If you have an e-permit you don't need to display anything in your windscreen – we can tell if your vehicle has an e-permit by reading its number plate and checking it against our records.

Going forward, we are in the process of refreshing our Customer Contact Strategy and this will include a website enhancement project, where we will prioritise For those areas that can be automated (for shift to online):

- Services identified by departments as a priority
- Highest efficiency gains
- Low complexity transactions
- Development that is relatively easy to implement
- Areas with strong demand from customers

**15. From: Mary Butler
To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport**

Re LBM's sale and transfer of land at Church Path and Hallowfield Way Mitcham, what plans, and over what period of time, does Merton have for its land on Hallowfield Way? Will this be delivered by Merantun Development Ltd and when will the local community be engaged?

Reply

The contract for the sale and transfer of these lands is not completed as completion is dependent upon grant of planning permission with a longstop date of 30th September 2020. Once the transfer of the property to the council is completed the council will need to consider whether to retain the property for its own use or to dispose of its interest. This decision will be made in the normal way under the constitution and should planning permission be sought the local community will be engaged through the planning process.

**16. From: Mrs Carpenter
To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport**

Why are you still allowing the owners of the Burn Bullock to have squatters and not have them or the owners pay any council tax which is chargeable on the first floors (according to the council tax department) and also allowing the squatters/tenants to fix fencing to a listed building.

Reply

The Council's planning enforcement team recently visited the site to inspect following various concerns regarding the site. The occupiers expressed the view they were 'guardians' protecting the property. However, the issue of Council tax will be passed to the Council tax section for investigation. The issue of fixing fencing to the building

was not previously raised, although other aspects were, and will therefore be investigated by the enforcement team accordingly along with the occupation issue.

17. From: Barry Smith
To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport

Can the council please provide an update on whether Merantun Developments Ltd will be adopting PassivHaus energy standard for the homes it is/will be building and if not, an explanation of the decision making process that was involved?

Reply

Merantun Development Ltd have considered a number of approaches to achieving sustainability and carbon reduction policies. These are explained in the company's planning applications; available to view online at www.merton.gov.uk/planning

Whilst Merantun is not building to full PassivHaus specification, it has adopted a fabric-first approach to building design. This reduces the need for residents to use energy use in the first instance. Merantun is also promoting low-carbon technology such as air-source-heat-pumps and is not using gas in its developments; further reducing the demand on fossil fuels.

18. From: Jane Plant
To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport

Following the council's declaration of a climate emergency, will it introduce a policy that no mature trees will be lost as a result of new development, say when this will take effect and also introduce a tree strategy for the borough which was approved by Cabinet in 2012?

Reply

Since declaring a climate emergency, both council officers and the Climate Emergency Working Group has kicked off a work programme within the Council to consider the implications of the 2030 and 2050 target and develop an action plan. This includes considering how key policies and strategies, such as the Draft Local Plan, need to be amended in response to the Climate Emergency declaration. More information can be found on Merton's website: <https://www.merton.gov.uk/planning-and-buildings/sustainability-and-climate-change/climate-emergency-working-group> The council's planning policies already support the retention of mature trees.

19. From: John Davis
To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport

Ask Merton Council whether it will reduce the number of mature broadleaf trees proposed to be lost as part of The Canons Lottery project following its declaration of a climate emergency?

Reply

Yes, we have reduced the number of mature trees that were proposed to be lost in the Canons “Parks for People” project. The Project Manager for The Canons ‘Parks for People Project’ recently met with community representatives, the Council’s Arboricultural manager, Merton Tree Warden Group and the Consultant Landscape Architect.

At the meeting, the tree felling and planting proposals for the Canons project were discussed. The number of mature broadleaf trees proposed to be lost as part of the project were reduced, mainly through carrying out minor works to a number of trees that had previously been earmarked for felling.

20. From: Nicola De Brett To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport

Please can a cycle advanced stop box be installed outside South Wimbledon station going south. I cycle through this way 5 times a week .Doing this will support cycling through this junction and reduce the polluted air I have to breathe. Merton Council and TFL need to act on this.

Reply

We want to work with Transport for London to improve South Wimbledon junction for all users. We support cycling improvements and as part of proposed improvements we will raise this request with Transport for London who are responsible for approving amendments to stop lines at traffic signals.

21. From: Dan De Brett To the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Health and the Environment

Could some rubbish bins be placed at entrances/exits to the cycle/footpath by Arthur Road, Joseph Hood rec & Green Lane and bins along the path would be nice too. My family removed about 20 bin liners of rubbish from this path over Christmas and it'll only come back without bins.

Reply

I would like to thank you and your family for your support and community spirit in the voluntary work which you have undertaken. This is very much appreciated.

With reference to the specific location, these are primarily cycle paths / routes which we expect our service provider to undertake the required litter picking and sweeping of these areas.

In regards to street litter bins at the site entrances and exits, we need to be mindful of how this may attract anti-social behaviour and in particularly fly-tipping. I have asked the Public Space team to review these locations, with a view of conducting a trial by

siting litter bin facilities on an interim basis. If the litter bins aid in managing litter and do not attract unwanted larger waste items, they will be adopted formally.

22. From: Ian Veacock
To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport

What is the minimum habitable roomspace and floorspace for a new build 2bed 5person flat (according to Merton and/or London Mayor) space standards?

Reply

The minimum space standards for new homes in London are set in the Mayor's London Plan. These space standards are the same as central government's national space standards. There are no space standards for a 2 bedroom /5 person dwelling; the space standards applied to two-bedroom dwellings stop at four people. The space standards for dwelling of 5 people or more require three bedrooms and range from 86 to 99 square metres depending on the number of storeys. The space standards can be found here: <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/planning/london-plan/current-london-plan/london-plan-chapter-3/policy-35-quality>

Supplementary

Yes, looking at this how then given that there are a number of existing two bedroom, five-person properties scheduled for demolition as part of regeneration proposals, how are these going to be re-provided to provide accommodation for these said five persons?

Reply

In response to that supplementary question I'd like to thank Mr Veacock; clearly in terms of the space standards there will be a lot more floor space provided as a result of the three regeneration schemes in the Borough. I am confident that our policy is robust on this matter and it does meet national space standards.

23. From: Nicola Thompson
To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport

It is well known that road danger, air/noise pollution, and unattractive car-dominant environments are a deterrent to walking and cycling in London. Given Merton Council's commitment to Climate Emergency measures, sustainable transport and improving air quality, please outline planned highways improvements for Plough Lane and how they address this agenda?

Reply

The highways improvements planned for Plough Lane (Merton Catalyst / AFC Wimbledon) will:

- Bring the local highways up to spec required for the lifetime of the development
- Invest in traffic measures at the Durnsford Road / Plough Lane junction, and on Haydon's Road
- The works have been designed to comply with healthy streets agenda:
 - The area will be greener: sustainable drainage and new trees will be going in, this will also help to reduce surface water flood risk; trees also have additional air quality benefits
 - The size of the pavement will be increased which will help encourage people to walk
- Safety audits will be carried out on the changes
- +£1million is going from the developers to Transport for London to improve bus capacity
- Earlier this year Merton Council allocated funding from Neighbourhood Fund (community) from the Plough Lane development to improve shopfronts on Haydon's Road – this work will start in 2020
- +£200,000 will go towards improving play space for children and teenagers in the local park nearest the development (which happens to be Garrett Park in Wandsworth).

The above sets out the improvements arising from the Stadium scheme. Should other sites come forward, such as the adjacent Volante site, these may provide further benefits.

**24. From: Kenneth Cobley
To the Cabinet Member for Voluntary Sector, Partnerships and Community Safety**

I would like to know why the town centre is plagued with beggars, some of whom sit there with expensive rucksacks. I suspect many are not homeless, but just using our good nature to sponge a tax-free living. When will you do something about it?

Reply

The Community Safety service, with police and housing colleagues are taking action. Where there are people begging we will, when possible, engage with these people to ascertain the nature of their business. Where there is genuine homelessness and support needs we work with support agencies to engage them and support them to look at their options, including working to support them, to not live, on the street. This can take some time however due to the complex nature of homelessness.

Where we believe that the begging is problematic, we will seek to take enforcement action wherever and however it is possible. These actions can include the issuing of community protection warnings and notices as well as seeking to issue fines and arrest for breaches of these. We have issued several CPWs and CPNs to beggars and arrests have been made with those arrested taken through the criminal justice system.

We need the support of residents to help us identify where these people are and when they are arriving/leaving as, if they are begging, and this is linked to wider criminality, the intelligence we receive will assist us in tackling this further.

25. From: Maurice Groves

To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport

Why do you use employment land for other purposes than high added value employment? I understand 247 Burlington Road is likely to be used for other purposes than most of the 20th century. High added value local Jobs will save on travel, travel costs, improve carbon footprint and local economy.

Reply

The council's planning strategy is to protect needed employment land for employment uses. Merton's emerging Local Plan proposes 245-247 Burlington Road as site allocation RP.3 for an active ground floor of shops and services, workspace, office and / or light industrial as well as new homes on upper floors. We consider that supporting a mix of uses on the site will help to boost the local economy, provide space for businesses, provide activity along the street, reducing the need for travel and provide much-needed new homes.

26. From: Ronald Dominy

To the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance

A Council employee, though not a Merton Park resident, parks a vehicle in Merton Park on residents' spaces with a resident's permit. Council seeks to justify increased parking charges as a way of improving air quality by discouraging car use yet provides employees with permits. How is this justified?

Reply

Some council employees, as part of their conditions of employment, need to have a local parking permit in order to undertake essential duties and ensure the safety and well-being of our residents. The Council is, however, currently undertaking a review of staff parking permits which is aligned to the council's ambition to improve air quality within Merton.

27. From: Ingrid Dickenson

To the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Health and the Environment

Re the South London Waste Plan: why does Merton Council rely on pollution measurements 'one mile' away from the source in Weir Road to justify maintaining that site, instead of quantifying the high levels of traffic and air pollution locally which result from waste processing operations there?

Reply

- The Council refreshes and reviews its network of monitoring to comply with its statutory responsibilities. In 2017 we completely refreshed our NO2 monitoring throughout the borough.
- It is important to note that there needs to be a degree of consistency to this monitoring to ensure that we can show changes to annual trends, therefore many of these sites need to remain static.
- The Pollution Team actively supports citizen science projects, and will work with communities for specific site monitoring; groups can apply for this through the Air Quality Action Group (New branch of the Environmental Forum).
- The main issue from pollution at this location will be from dust linked to poor housekeeping from the many waste sites, these are regulated by the Environment Agency, however officers are in contact with colleagues in street cleaning to tackle this problem.
- On a positive note, the Pollution Team secured funding from the Stadium Development for a new automated monitoring station to be located in Plough Lane, this will form a part of a London Network providing real time data in this area.

28. From: Michael Gould

To the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Health and the Environment

Considering that Merton council has declared a climate emergency, and that methane released from decomposing food waste is a powerful greenhouse gas; What percentage of Merton's Local Authority Schools' food waste is recycled and what measures are the council taking to ensure that all food waste is recycled?

Reply

I am pleased to advise that we do provide a food waste collection service for Merton maintained schools. For those schools that use this facility and keep their food waste separate from the general waste 100% of this material is recycled.

School waste disposal is an item that is nationally delegated to schools. However, the council operates a central school meals contract for primary and special schools to buy into and all but one maintained school does so. The council uses this arrangements to ensure food waste is recycled by stipulating that the contractor is responsible for making available food waste disposal facilities

Our food waste is sent to our disposal contractor, Agrivert where it is processed using the most efficient and modern anaerobic digestion technology. Here all the gases are captured and used to generate electricity whilst the solid by-product is used as a soil improver for the agriculture and farming industry.

29. From: Emma Maddison

To the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Health and the Environment

What measures have been put in place with Veolia to ensure that renewal notices for garden waste collections are sent out at the appropriate time, and not too early for residents to be able to pay for renewal of their service?

Reply

Our garden waste service continues to be valued by our residents and demand for the service continues to grow. The service is fast approaching 10,000 customers and we routinely review with our service provider, Veolia, on how the renewal process can be improved.

In order to inform customers of the annual renewal date, we provide written notification four weeks before their subscription ends (28-30 days) and a follow-up letter is sent 14 days after their service renewal date has ended. Residents can renew their subscription for the service as early as 30 days before the service end date.

30. From: Gareth Hughes

To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport

Merton is already adversely affected by excessive plane noise and pollution from Heathrow. What is Merton Council doing to object to the expansion plans for a third runway? Is Merton Council involved in the legal action by other Local Authorities to stop the expansion? If not, why not?

Reply

- Merton is playing an active role in the many consultations around Heathrow and has now produced a webpage; this outlines our concerns and responses to recent consultations.
- We remain vigilant on this issue and its potential impact to the borough.

The published policy statement is as follows:

Merton borough lies almost equidistant between London Heathrow and Gatwick airports. The Council recognises the demand for airport expansion and the decision to expand Heathrow that has already been taken. The Council is now and has always been determined to ensure that any expansion has as little negative and harmful impact on the residents and businesses of Merton and we will work hard throughout this and future consultations to mitigate any impact.

Merton Council is concerned about the future impact of Heathrow expansion and the potential for impact to the borough and its citizens. This includes any changes to flight paths over the borough.

Merton and its officers will continue to play a role in the consultation process and we will actively encourage the residents to respond.

Our officers will act as key stakeholders throughout the consultation phases scrutinising the technical detail and highlighting risks to the borough, and report this information back to Leadership.

31. From: Laura Collins
To the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Health and Environment

How does the council intend to enforce anti idling and why are fines not being issued?

Reply

- The Pollution Team is actively tackling the problem of anti-idling, working in partnership with parking services. This includes providing training to our CEO's to assist in campaigns and raising this with motorists as part of their daily patrols.
- We are also part of a London wide campaign sponsored by the Mayor of London and are rolling-out signage throughout the borough.
- Many boroughs suffer from the problem of issuing fines for idling as the process involves asking the motorist to switch off their engines, and its only refusal that can result in a fine. These are very rare throughout London
- Officers are requesting stricter legislation to tackle this problem and we are doing our best within the framework we have to operate in.
- The Pollution Team do welcome volunteers to joint their campaigns to tackle this problem throughout the borough.

32. From: Maggie Kane
To the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Health and Environment

Air pollution is an issue that many of us are concerned about. I understand the council monitors it and various volunteer groups monitor it. Can you tell me how the council will use, share and report the data collected.

Reply

We monitor air quality to comply with our legal responsibility as an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). By monitoring air quality around the borough, we can assess our compliance with the air quality objectives and evaluate the effectiveness of policies and projects. This can also be used to help provide information and alerts for residents, workers and visitors when pollution levels are elevated.

Monitoring also provides highly detailed information on long-term trends in pollution levels. Sharing air quality data beyond our borough is an important contribution to identifying national and regional trends.

Data is reported in our statutory return called an Annual Status Report, these are sent to and approved by our governing bodies and published on our website.

Officers will also consider reporting citizen science projects where this data meets the required standards for the reporting.

**33. From: Su Moody Greenwood
To the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Health and Environment**

How does the council intend to enforce anti idling; why are fines not being issued? People seem ignorant about this. Do they understand what 'idling' means? They don't seem to know/care they are causing air pollution. They seem to be people with children. Please treat this with its' deserved urgency.

Reply

- The Pollution Team is actively tackling the problem of anti-idling, working in partnership with parking services. This includes providing training to our CEO's to assist in campaigns and raising this with motorists as part of their daily patrols.
- We are also part of a London wide campaign sponsored by the Mayor of London and are rolling-out signage throughout the borough.
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- Officers are requesting stricter legislation to tackle this problem and we are doing our best within the framework we have to operate in.
- The Pollution Team do welcome volunteers to joint their campaigns to tackle this problem throughout the borough.

**34. From: Gobi Raj Sriparan
To the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Health and Environment**

We are known as 'Mucky Merton' by our own residents and neighbouring councils. What actions has the council taken to combat extensive fly-tipping in our streets since the last time this issue was raised?

Reply

In line with the National trend, we have been handling a sustained increase in the volume of fly-tipped waste incidents across the borough. The waste deposited illegally is becoming a common form of anti-social behaviour and damages the overall image of our borough. On average, we are clearing in excess of 1,000 fly-tipping incidents per month with this sustained increase blighting our communities.

Unfortunately, fly-tipping has become common place in some areas even though it is a criminal offence, caused by the few whilst impacting on the many.

In partnership with our service provider, our primary aim is to ensure that we have the right resources in place to respond in a timely manner to reported incidents and to utilise evidence we gather to inform our approach to enforcement. We have trialled to great success additional operational resource that has improved the time taken to respond to reported incidents. We plan on further supporting this resource while volumes of incidents remain unacceptably high.

Prior to finalising the Fly-Tipping Strategy, the Public Space Division has held a number of Member engagement workshops in November and December with the objective of better understanding from Ward Councillors the key themes and site-specific issues arising across their Wards. The outcome of these workshops has informed our Fly-tipping Action Plan that is utilised by the enforcement team to target specific locations. An example of the success being made by our enforcement team was the use of CCTV at an identified fly-tipping hotspot which has led to the issuing of over 60 fixed penalty notices and possible formal prosecutions through the Courts.

**35. From: Martin Lake
To the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Health and Environment**

Why is there no street cleaning in conjunction with refuse collection day? The (west) end of my street (All Saints Road) is perpetually strewn with rubbish creating an unsightly and unpleasant environment.

Reply

The SLWP contract with Veolia is an output based specification that requires our streets to be maintained to the required acceptable standard. In areas in which our roads are below the established standard, the service provider is required to attend to these areas and ensure that the road is brought back up to standard in the agreed time scale. As such the contract is not based on a prescribed frequency of sweeping or litter picking.

However, there are schedules that our service provider, Veolia, operate to and distinct operational areas they cover where a street cleaner needs to attend and clean if below standard.

It is important to note that these schedules will vary depending on pedestrian foot traffic, land use and need. The schedules are continually reviewed in order to ensure the efficient deployment of the suitable resource.

Our Neighbourhood Client team regularly monitor these areas along with joint inspection with Veolia's Environment Managers. The information is collated by the service provider and if required the schedule can be amended in order that the streets are cleaned to a required frequency and ensure that they do not fall below grade.

In regards to All Saints Road, I have asked for this to be investigated and action taken to ensure the required standard is met.

To assist in this matter, we encourage our residents to report service related issues on-line as this helps us to ensure we alert Veolia to areas requiring attention whether it is fly tipped material, or recent litter or any other environmental issue

36. From: Eve Cohen
To the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Health and Environment

Road sweepers' green refuse sacks are regularly left on the streets for a week or more. Does the contract with Veolia still require these sacks to be collected within 24 hours and what is being done to enforce this?

Reply

Yes – our contract does require street cleansing sacks to be collected at the end of each working day. Where this has not been completed they have 24 hours from notification to rectify this service requirement.

As part of the Annual review process I have asked officers to review the current Service Performance Indicators to ensure that this area of service is covered and the contractor held to account.

Please consider using the official reporting process below to ensure your enquiry is processed in the most efficient manner. Our website enables you to easily report a range of service requests including:

- Missed recycling or waste collection
- Litter and street cleaning problems
- Abandoned cars
- Graffiti
- Fly-tipping

Report It On-line: <http://www.merton.gov.uk/doitonline/report-it.htm>

Or if you prefer, please telephone the **Merton Council Contact Centre:** Tel: 020 8274 4901.

The Contact Centre are able to deal with the same range of service requests as the Report It On-line function.

In the interim I would welcome further information on your experience in order to ensure that these areas are rectified and proactively inspected in the future in order to ensure our service provider is delivering on our requirements.

Supplementary

Thank you and I thank the Cabinet Member for his answer and I'm very happy to provide additional information on the community's experience of green street sweeper sacks regularly being left for over a week. Street cleanliness is not helped by Veolia dropping recycling and rubbish when they collect which they don't pick up once it's dropped; recycling blowing out of recycle boxes because residents don't

have lids or enough boxes so the boxes are overflowing. When I do report the green sacks I report, I'm getting to my question, when I report the green sacks on the streets I report them as fly-tipping which if enough other residents do the same will skew your figures and also probably cost you more money in your renegotiations with Veolia. What can the Council do to get Veolia and it's not rocket science because they must know where their street sweepers are leaving sacks and on what days to actually collect these sacks on time, to not drop litter which they don't pick up and what can you do to be more proactive in providing residents with enough recycle boxes and lids?

Reply

I thank her for her question and her supplementary question. Can I also thank her for everything she does in the South Wimbledon community and I know she was involved in a lot of leaf clearing in the autumn. The problems of the green sacks are continuing, I think they are getting better but I do accept that they are still an issue. I think that the locations in which they're being left are now more consistent to the ones that we would wish them to be left then they were previously but I accept that they are still left later than they should in some circumstances and we will continue to push Veolia to ensure they are cleared by the end of that day. In terms of the recycling boxes and we had a brief conversation at the South London Waste Partnership about this last night, lids are now available for the boxes they can be ordered or collected from Garth Road but I am happy to look into ways that we can publicise that and potentially work with Veolia to ascertain which properties might need additional resource so that is fed back to ensure that those properties do get that resource.

37. From: Andrew Boyce To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport

Council claims to care about tackling air pollution and a 2017 motion agreed to work with residents in South Wimbledon. How will it mitigate the toxic pollution resulting from the major gas works at South Wimbledon junction? Who granted a licence for such work proceeding at a tortoise level pace?

Reply

Unfortunately, works of this kind are unavoidable and can have a considerable impact on congestion and the traffic network. This can also cause localised short-term spikes in pollution.

Officers in the Pollution Team are in contact with the contractors and colleagues to see if notifications can be added to signage around anti idling messages to road users. This is a point we would like to push with many road works that have an impact on idling.

Pollution at the junctions of Merton Road / High Street Merton and Kingston Road have been monitored on a daily basis since the start of these works and no noticeable increases have been observed on the Londonair website: <http://www.londonair.org.uk/LondonAir/>

There is an air monitoring apparatus located road side on Merton Road and if there was any significant rises in pollution, this would have been registered. With regards to the pollution of works sites in general stemming from an increase in congestion, this has to be taken into consideration with all factors when planning works. It is a fine balancing act of providing safe and expeditious road works, minimising impact to traffic & pedestrians and most importantly, ensuring that local residents are accommodated with a gas supply. The current gas works are on schedule and SGN is doing everything it can to ensure works are completed as quickly as possible thus minimising pollution in the South Wimbledon area.

**38. From: Sara Sharp
To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport**

Merton declared a Climate Emergency, hired officers and set up a Climate Emergency Working Group, but what is it doing to link up departments such as planning to ensure net zero carbon by 2030 in new builds, and to stop making poor planning decisions that don't address this climate emergency.

Reply

Since declaring a climate emergency, both council officers and the Climate Emergency Working Group has kicked off a work programme within the Council to consider the implications of the 2030 and 2050 target and develop an action plan This includes considering:

- decarbonising the Council's fleet and buildings,
- approaches to integrate climate considerations in the Council's procurement policies and decision-making,
- integrating the Council's climate ambitions into the Staff Travel Plan to reduce emissions from Council staff travel.
- how the Draft Local Plan and other key council strategies, need to be amended to help achieve the targets set out in the Climate Emergency Declaration

To help deliver the above, a number of teams, including public health, transport and Future Merton are working together. We have also supported a number of climate internships which have helped to maximise what our teams can achieve. We are very grateful to the volunteers on the Climate Emergency Working Group who have given up their time and knowledge to gather evidence and ideas and are helping to identify priority actions. For more information please see Merton's website: <https://www.merton.gov.uk/planning-and-buildings/sustainability-and-climate-change/climate-emergency>

Supplementary

Thank you for the response it was a little bit predictable. When can we expect a clear schedule of action for the climate emergency committee because it seems to be just one meeting after the other and will the Council's own property development company Merantun Development adopt anything to address the climate emergency; four live applications so far nothing at all regarding the climate emergency and also will the Council sign up to the London energy transformation initiative to cut carbon, net carbon in the Borough, not the Council by 2030 not 2050?

Reply

So in respect of the climate emergency, we have had four meetings of the climate emergency working group now and at the most recent meeting the different subgroups that have been meeting to look at initiatives presented their ideas back; that's now led to a long list of ideas which has been circulated to the climate emergency working group. There is a workshop planned for the end of February, so that will include members of the working group, internal officers of the Council whose support for the initiatives will be crucial to achieving net zero by 2030 and also external stakeholders from housing associations, business representatives and others whose support again will be important to achieving what's currently the target for net zero across the Borough by 2050. In respect of the targets, at the time that we declared the motion, we made clear that the 2050 target was very much the backstop date and that it was hoped that it would be achieved far sooner than this but clearly when approximately 98% of the emissions in the Borough fall outside of the Council's control, it's very difficult for the Council to put in place measures to decarbonise the wider Borough and that's why we put in place the 2030 target to demonstrate the leadership on our part. I can't answer in respect of the housing development company but I'm sure Councillor Whelton can provide a response via writing in due course.

39. From: Dom Aitchison To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport

Merton Council won a 2013 London Transport Award for "Excellence in Walking and Public Realm", in recognition of the "Destination Wimbledon" project. With drop-offs/pick-ups from Wimbledon Station now almost impossible, given the Council's acceptance of 10-20 delivery scooters occupying the remaining parking spaces, is the Council still a worthy winner?

Reply

The Council is pleased that the local businesses are doing well but is also aware of the issues surrounding delivery scooters. The Council is working with the local business in determining a suitable facility for the increase in demand for scooter parking. Meanwhile, given the excellent public transport to Wimbledon town centre (the only town centre in London served by underground, tram, rail and bus), visitors are encouraged to use public transport instead of driving into the town centre, thereby minimising congestion and pollution.

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From Councillor Peter McCabe to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport

Could the Cabinet Member provide the Council with an update on the progress of Bishopsford Road Bridge?

Reply

We have been working hard on reopening Bishopsford Road Bridge to all traffic and we are on track to take a decision on the quickest and safest way to get the road reopened at Cabinet on 24th February. Our current programme for all options that we will start on site removing the broken parts of the bridge in March-April with the main phases of construction taking place from April onwards. This programme has been circulated to more than 3,000 homes in the latest newsletter and is available online <https://www.merton.gov.uk/streets-parking-transport/roadworks/bishopsford-bridge>

Supplementary

Thank you Madam Mayor and I'd like to thank the Cabinet Member for his response. My supplementary is very simple; does the Cabinet Member recognise the utter frustration of local residents who wish to go to work, to take their kids to school, to do the shopping, to visit St Helier Hospital and go about their daily lives and will he do all he can to just get this done?

Reply

I'd like to thank Councillor McCabe for his supplementary and of course we're doing everything possible to get this bridge fixed because we do know that it has caused a huge amount of inconvenience to residents. It was an exceptional set of circumstances which led to its' collapse last June, but now we have to focus on fixing but also as well liaising closely with local residents including having a newsletter, a forthcoming meeting but also as well a clear plan of action going to the Cabinet meeting later this month. I'd also like to place on record my considerable thanks to the work of Councillor McCabe, Councillor Irons and Councillor Alambritis who have certainly been very active on this matter, but also as well the work of officers of this Council in terms of addressing this issue. This is of utmost importance and you will be seeing in due course that we are addressing this. Thank you.

From Councillor Nigel Benbow to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport

In 2018 the road works in South Wimbledon led to six weeks of chaos and congestion for local residents and were ultimately abandoned; what lessons did the Cabinet Member learn then, and how have they been applied in 2020?

Reply

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From the essential roadworks that were undertaken in 2018, we have concluded that a full road closure for the 2020 gas works is the best option for traffic management and the delivery of complex, essential utility works. Extended working hours are preferable, to a point but we are also mindful of the noise and vibration impact on immediate neighbours and previous complaints associated with emergency utility works at night. We have approved works between 8am-6pm and not 24 hour working to offer residents some respite from noise. It was beneficial to ensure that Southern Gas Networks (SGN) had a dedicated Stakeholder Engagement Officer available to attend site as and when needed, along with managing and responding to all queries and complaints from our residents and businesses.

SGN, at the Council's request, completed early communication with stakeholders, and delivered leaflets to the surrounding residents in October/November 2019 and advanced warning/early warning signs were installed in the first week of January 2020.

While the works in 2018 were postponed due to a number of reasons including an unrecorded water culvert being found under the road and the discovery of other unmarked utility apparatus. It did allow Merton and SGN to discover these in 2018 and plan the build around them in these current works. This has also ensured that SGN would have the correct processes and equipment in place to excavate around other utility provider's assets and protect them during their works.

We are aware that utility works cause temporary disruption to residents and unfortunately these works are necessary to ensure residents and businesses have uninterrupted access to utilities.

Residents and businesses can be kept updated on works via:

SGN's website: <https://www.sgn.co.uk/our-gas-works/major-planned-projects/merton-merton-road>

SGN's information leaflet is online at:
https://portal.one.network/downloads/cm/merton-merton-high-street-elgin-flyer-v1_2a3b602acc.pdf

Keep updated with Merton's roadwork bulletin at: <https://www.merton.gov.uk/streets-parking-transport/roadworks/current-roadworks-and-traffic-disruptions>

Supplementary

Thank you Madam Mayor. These works have caused misery. Would the Cabinet Member ensure that SGN complete the works as quickly as possible and how is he ensuring the safety of the children walking to local schools in South Wimbledon?
Thank you.

Reply

I'd like to thank Councillor Nigel Benbow for his supplementary question, of course we want to see these works completed as soon as possible and to actually get the traffic moving again. It's unfortunate obviously these roadworks will take a length of time, but it was essential these works were actually undertaken and lessons have certainly been learned from 2018. In terms of his further supplementary about the safety of local children of course obviously we're working very closely with local schools, your ward colleague and Cabinet Member for Education Councillor Stringer, I'm liaising closely with her and also as well the local schools in the area, in particular Pelham School. Thank you.

From Councillor Agatha Akyigyina to the Cabinet member for Adult Social Care, Health and the Environment

Nationally, flytipping incidents have risen by 40% since 2012. Can the Cabinet member please tell us how the issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices is being used as a deterrent in Merton?

Reply

The cleanliness of our borough is an issue that affects everyone who visits, lives, works or studies in Merton. The standard has dropped below what we would expect to see; and addressing this is a key priority for me.

In line with the National trend, we have been responding to a sustained increase in the volume of fly-tipped waste incidents across the borough. The regularity of waste deposited is becoming a common form of anti-social behaviour, which is damaging to both the environment the overall image of our Public Realm. On average we are clearing in excess of 1,000 fly-tipped incidents per month.

Enforcement and the issuing of Fix Penalty Notices (FPN) alone is not sufficient to combat this national issue. As such we have launched our Fly-tipping strategy which is underpinned by 3 main areas of focus;

- Early intervention – education, communication and engagement
- Preventing reoccurrence – operational service and target hardening
- Targeted enforcement – FPNs, prosecutions & vehicle stops

As part of the overt work which we have already carried out I am pleased to advise that in the last quarter (Quarter 3) of this year, our Enforcement team have caught 62 vehicles on camera depositing waste (Fly-tipping). To date, the team have issued 22 £400 fixed penalty notices. We also have a number of cases where alleged fly-tippers have been requested to attend an interview under caution as the matter warrants a formal prosecution through the Courts rather than a FPN.

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I am confident that with the right balance between education and engagement supported by targeted enforcement we will see a change in behaviour and a reduction in the volume of fly-tipping incidents.

In addition, the following table provides the Ward based summary of the FPNs issued by the enforcement team in 2019 to tackle fly-tipping incidents.

WARDS	2019 fines issued
Abbey	15
Cannon Hill	4
Colliers Wood	25
Cricket Green	17
Dundonald	0
Figges Marsh	116
Graveney	32
Hillside	2
Lavender Fields	6
Longthornton	50
Lower Morden	0
Merton Park	26
Pollards Hill	24
Ravensbury	40
Raynes Park	13
St Helier	11
Trinity	1
West Barnes	1
Wimbledon Park	5
Wimbledon Village	0

Supplementary

Thank you Madam Mayor. I'd like to thank the Cabinet Member for his response and I'd like to ask what further steps is the administration taking to crackdown on fly-tipping?

Reply

Can I thank her for her question and her supplementary question. As she will be aware, the draft fly-tipping strategy was published last year and it was considered by the Scrutiny Committee at its' meeting in September. Following that it was discussed at the collection day workshops that were held by public space in the autumn and I'd like to thank all colleagues who attended those because that's enabled us to build up a far more accurate picture of where the specific issues across the Borough are. There's a further paper due to be discussed at Scrutiny tomorrow evening and members will be aware that additional resource has been put into tackling this issue with our contractor. The performance on clearing reported fly-tips remains very good

but we do need to get far better at enforcing and that means increasing our capacity to ensure that we can inspect far more. In addition to investigating more I think we need to support our residents who are helping us to crack down on fly-tips and to this end, we are looking at creating an enviro-crime award which would provide residents whose evidence leads to a fixed penalty notice or a prosecution with a financial reward taken from that penalty. We're also working with partners across the South London Waste Partnership around measures to lobby Government for additional powers and resource.

From Cllr Nick McLean to the Leader of the Council

Now that the United Kingdom has left the European Union, does the Leader of the Council agree that no matter how you voted in the 2016 referendum, it is now time to look ahead with confidence, come together and move forward as one?

Reply

I agree with Councillor McLean, the Conservative Leader of the Opposition, about the need to come together, but I urge this to be done not with the crowing, Hard Brexit mentality of the ERG, but rather in a spirit of conciliation, respecting the concerns of everyone including those who feel a great attachment to Europe, have friends or family who are from or live in Europe, or who simply want to visit or trade with Europe without additional barriers being put in their way.

Furthermore, while we hope that a deal is delivered that ensures at least as good an outcome as currently enjoyed, and an extra £350 million per week for the NHS, it is important that any failure is not blamed on those who do not support Brexit or did not vote for it. Councillor McLean's question gives the impression of being intended to lay the blame for possible future failure on those who support a strong relationship with the EU, rather than hard Brexiteers, and I hope he will correct this.

Supplementary

Thank you Madam Mayor and I'm disappointed by the Leader of the Council's response. My question was a sincere attempt to show leadership on this key issue in bringing everyone together and move forward. Instead his response is frankly petty and I say Madam Mayor, if he is unable to show the required leadership, clinging to the politics of division, then perhaps it is time he went. So I am going to give him another go; does the Leader of the Council agree that now the United Kingdom has left the European Union, that it is time to look ahead with confidence and come together and move forward as one? A simple yes or no will suffice.

Reply

I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his original question and for his failure in his supplementary question to correct the premise of his original question that is looking for future failure, looking to those who want a strong relationship with the EU, looking to the Council to support its' EU Citizens, looking for a relationship that binds us with our friends, our traders across the sea, across the Channel. So, we know you are a hard brexiteer and you've just confirmed that.

From Councillor Dave Ward to the Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration and Transport

Electric car charging points are a vital element in encouraging more environmentally-friendly travel. Can the Cabinet Member please tell Council of any plans to increase the number of these points?

Reply

We currently have 130 publicly accessible electric charging points in the borough. We intend to introduce a further 4 over the next 2 months. Officers in partnership with Blue Point will continue to investigate and implement further suitable sites.

The Council is also investigating the provisions of lamp column charging points.

Additionally, the Council uses every opportunity to impose electric charging provisions on new developments.

Supplementary

Thank you Madam Mayor, I'm delighted particularly that new electric charging points have been installed just at the end of my road in Colliers Wood and I walk past every day. Further to that, what is the Council doing to ensure that future developments in the Borough are also environmentally friendly?

Reply

I think it's essential that future developments are environmentally friendly. I think that is a key component of any kind of development. We will continue to push for car-free developments in the Borough to ensure that people don't own cars but also as well ensuring the building standards as well are of a high quality and meet environmental standards. We as a Borough have been pioneering in that in terms of the Merton rule and we have led the way going forward and I'm confident that we will continue to do so in terms of future developments in Merton. Thank you.

From Councillor Carl Quilliam to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport

In light of the recent devastating crash of a truck into a resident's property on Claremont Avenue, will the Cabinet member consider supporting traffic calming

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measures for some of the roads close to Shannon corner and the A3 and meet with West Barnes councillors to discuss what this could look like?

Reply

Claremont Ave and much of the surrounding roads are already subject to traffic calming – many with road humps that are the most effective traffic calming features that can be applied to the public highway.

The Council has an annual programme investigating all recorded personal injury accidents throughout the borough. Damage only accidents are not recorded and therefore are not investigated. Accidents are addressed by analysing the contributory factors and in response to this particular incident and if the Council has no record of it and the Police have not reported it as a personal injury accident; it is, therefore, not possible to offer a constructive comment. Unfortunately many accidents are due to driver error / distraction and yet the perception is that it is invariably speed which is not the cause in these cases

Although there are currently no plans to take any action in this area, Officers would be happy to meet Ward Councillors to discuss any local traffic or highway issues.

Supplementary

Thank you Madam Mayor and thank you to the Cabinet Member for his response. So part of the issue is things like width restrictions and weight restrictions in the area are often inconsistently applied so vehicles that are too big too often end up on roads that are too small. When we've met officers before there has been no budget to invest in these roads, so given particularly the possible Tesco site development that will bring larger vehicles to the area, at least during the building phase, will the Cabinet Member at least look at prioritising some budget for this sooner rather than later?

Reply

Like any issue I'm more than willing to meet to discuss these issues with the West Barnes Councillors, at this time I'm not able to give any guarantees but of course I am willing to discuss possible options with them as I am with Councillors of any ward in this Borough. Thank you.

From Councillor Edward Gretton to the Cabinet Member for Finance

Please can the Cabinet Member for Finance kindly confirm the status of the new additional Council Tax scheme proposed by the Liberal Democrat group in 2019?

Reply

The Cabinet have carefully considered this proposal and have decided not to pursue it at this stage. This has also been reviewed recently by Scrutiny who came to the same conclusion.

Supplementary

Thank you Madam Mayor this question relates to the new additional Council Tax scheme that the Liberal Democrat group tried to set up for Wimbledon, where they wanted to raise £1000, I think they were trying to replicate the parking charges scheme Madam Mayor and raise monies just from Wimbledon and not from Mitcham and Morden for some reason, but will the Cabinet Member for Finance join me in thanking the excellent officers of this Council for their very clear work assessment which concluded that the Liberal Democrats' sums simply didn't add up, that their Council tax scheme was confused as it was convoluted and it would have cost more to administer than it could have possibly ever collected?

Reply

Thank you Madam Mayor. Thank you for the original the question and the follow-up. Thank you also for, I was very troubled by this at the Scrutiny meeting, very troubled that I'm having to say this but thank you for agreeing with me at that meeting and thank you for your kind words there. I think that we should recognise two things; first of all that the Liberal Democrats brought forward their idea with the best of intentions and they brought it forward because they recognise that funding for Councils has been cut consistently since 2010 and it needs to be reinforced in some way and we support the essential principle of that, however as the Scrutiny Committee and ourselves have concluded and our excellent officers that you referred to have concluded, this wasn't the right way of going about it. I'm very pleased that Councillor Gretton is opposed to the idea of increasing Council Tax for our residents particularly those who he believes can't afford to pay it and therefore I look forward to him later this evening supporting the Council Tax rebate scheme for the lowest paid, not just for the highest paid.

From Councillor Owen Pritchard to the Cabinet Member for Schools and Adult Education

Can the Cabinet Member please update Council on Merton's secondary school numbers?

Reply

For this school year, the Council has 1885 pupils in year 7 – this is 316 more than two years ago and the highest number of children in over a generation. Through the timely delivery of the new Harris Academy Wimbledon secondary school and the earlier expansion of Harris Academy Merton, we were able to ensure that all children were able to receive a school place at a local school that wanted one, though with very few spare places and so without impacting adversely on the finances of existing Good and Outstanding schools.

Demand is expected to remain at relatively similar levels for the next 3 years. We expect to ensure that there will be a secondary school place for everyone that needs

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it again for this September without further expansion and we expect to do so again for 2021. However, the position will continue to be closely monitored. To ensure they obtain a preference offer of a school place, parents are advised to ensure they read and follow the "Guide to applying for a secondary school place" which is on the Council's website.

Supplementary

Thank you Madam Mayor. What are we doing to address the growing demand for places in special schools?

Reply

Thank you Madam Mayor and thank you Councillor Pritchard for your question and supplementary and those of us who've already looked at the budget papers will be well aware of the continuing pressures that we are facing in providing as high a quality education as we can for all our pupils including those with Education Health and Care Plans in the face of tight budgets. So we have had a huge increase in demand for special school places without the sufficient increase in dedicated schools grants from the Government. So we're proud of our Local Authority specialist provision and we've already expanded Perseid School and Cricket Green School which cater for children with a range of learning needs. We have established a base at Stanford School for primary pupils with a diagnosis of Autism and further plans are being worked up to address the additional specialist provision that we do need to be run by the Local Authority to reduce our dependence on independent special schools and I'll update colleagues about these as these proposals develop.

From Councillor Daniel Holden to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport

Will the Cabinet Member tell us when he will reopen Bishopsford Road Bridge in Mitcham?

Reply

We have been working hard on reopening Bishopsford Road Bridge to all traffic and we are on track to take a decision on the quickest and safest way to get the road reopened at Cabinet on 24th February. Our current programme for all options that we will start on site removing the broken parts of the bridge in March-April with the main phases of construction taking place from April onwards. This programme has been circulated to more than 3,000 homes in the latest newsletter and is available online <https://www.merton.gov.uk/streets-parking-transport/roadworks/bishopsford-bridge>

Supplementary

Thank you Madam Mayor and thank you to the Cabinet Member for his response. This Labour Council has dithered and delayed causing misery for residents. Will the

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Cabinet Member agree with me that the Labour Council have no ability to manage bridge-building or utility works and when will he get a grip on these?

Reply

I'd like to thank Councillor Holden for his supplementary question. I completely disagree with him, as I said in my earlier response to Councillor McCabe, there's been a whole set of circumstances which has caused that delay including having to get sign-off by the Government Environment Agency but also as well in terms of the risk of flooding which meant that the bridge action had to be taken after the collapse of the bridge last summer. It is an unfortunate set of circumstances but as an administration we have a clear plan to address this, which is being discussed by Cabinet later this month and we are working to ensure that the bridge is open as soon as possible, but works will have to be undertaken on that bridge. Thank you.

From Councillor David Dean to the Cabinet Member to the Regeneration, Housing and Transport

Does the Cabinet Member support Stephen Hammond MP in calling for step free access to be included in the Wimbledon Chase station redevelopment?

Reply

The Council supports step free at all train stations and will support all associated campaigns. The Council will be seeking S106 contributions towards this.

Supplementary

Thank you very much Madam Mayor and I'd like to thank the Cabinet Member for his answer. What we're really looking for is specifics, we know that Labour Councillors specifically know about this Wimbledon Chase station proposed application, we know they've gone through it in detail, so what we want is a detailed answer; are you requesting step-free access when Wimbledon Chase train station is going to be developed and we want a straight answer, are they requesting and will they reject any application if no step-free access takes place?

Reply

I'd like to thank Councillor Dean for his supplementary; in terms of step-free access, if the Government and TfL are willing to fund it then it is obviously something we support but this Council will not be necessarily providing step-free access but obviously if it's part of any section 106 we will of course welcome step-free access. It's not a no but quite frankly we don't run the train services Councillor Dean.

From Councillor Rebecca Lanning to the Cabinet Member for Schools and Adult Education

Following the GOOD Ofsted inspection of Adult Education in Merton, can the Cabinet Member outline how this is being built on to ensure continued success?

Reply

Cabinet reinforced its commitment to providing high quality adult education for the borough at its meeting on Monday 3 February 2020 by agreeing the new strategic objectives for the service.

The London Borough of Merton is committed to providing high quality and sustainable adult learning in order to improve the social, economic, health and wellbeing of our residents. We will deliver this through a strategic investment approach: commissioning provision to the best providers in the field and using an evidence based approach to inform commissioning decisions. We aim to reduce inequalities across the borough by focussing investment on those most socially and / or economically disadvantaged whilst providing a broad range of learning opportunities to develop all of our resident's skills.

Since the transfer to a commissioning model of service it has successfully implemented its improvement action plans and has gone from a struggling provider to a successful service that is bringing in more learners and focusing its curriculum on improving the skills of residents. The commissioning model also ensures that the service is financially sustainable and able to adapt its provision to changing borough priorities.

Supplementary

Thank you Madam Mayor. Can I thank the Cabinet Member for her response and ask whether she could comment on how we can make sure adult learning opportunities are available for all including those facing barriers to learning?

Reply

Thank you Councillor Lanning and can I take this opportunity to congratulate the adult learning colleagues here in Merton and our providers across the Council for the improvement in our Ofsted judgement to Good, I'm really proud of that and one of the key reasons why and I'll thank my previous cabinet member for adult education Nick Draper for his work on moving to that model. One of the key reasons we move from a provider to a commissioning model is so that we can ensure that our courses are open and relevant to all learners; we're particularly proud of the work that we do for example for adults with learning disabilities in collaboration with a specialist college, some of which I recently went to visit in Pollards Hill library. One of our key performance indicators is to reach a high proportion of learners from the most deprived wards in our Borough and through commissioning a wider range of providers we've extended our ability to offer courses through community locations that are more accessible for those learners. Thank you.

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From Councillor Billy Christie to the Cabinet member for Voluntary Sector, Partnerships and Community Safety

Following the recent horrific incident in Croydon of a gang-related fatal attack, can the Cabinet Member please remind us of ongoing measures to tackle the national knife crime crisis?

Reply

The Council and the Community Safety Partnership are working hard to ensure that Merton remains a safe borough. We have a knife crime plan which sets out a range of work covering prevention initiatives through to enforcement, we are working collaboratively to safeguard young people and young adults who become affected by knife crime and the community at large.

Merton has been innovative in its work with community groups undertaking knife sweeps in areas of concern to the community and training residents, businesses etc. prior to sweeps to educate them.

The borough remains the 4th safest in the Metropolitan area and we are committed to delivering work to maintain this position.

Supplementary

Thank you Madam Mayor and thank you to the Cabinet Member for her answer. Can I ask does the Cabinet Member believe that the Mayor of London's approach which is treating the knife crime crisis as a national health epidemic is the right one and will we be following a similar approach here in Merton?

Reply

I thank Councillor Christie for his supplementary question and I agree with the sentiments which he has expressed and we in Merton will follow the same procedure but we listen to what the Justice Secretary Robert Buckland said this week; he unveiled the emergency laws to end knife crime and what happened to deal with this immediate problem we from the Labour party and the Mayor's office would like that in order to solve this problem of knife crime to reintroduce control orders which were in place in 2005 to 2011. When the Tory Government came into power they abolished it and also the Justice Secretary Chris Grayling when he was at the courts what he did was, he abolished the probation officer and what he's done so far at that time was privatise it, so we should reintroduce it back to the public ownership and that will make a difference for these offenders.

From Councillor James Holmes to the Cabinet Member for Voluntary Sector, Partnerships and Community Safety

Does the Cabinet Member support Wimbledon Police Station remaining open?

Reply

The decision on Wimbledon Police Station does not sit with the local authority or indeed the police. The Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime, Sophie Linden, and MOPAC are leading on this work and will announce their decision in due course.

The council's position on this remains the same as during the consultation period. We would urge MOPAC to maintain two police stations within the borough but appreciate the financial challenges which the Metropolitan Police are under. We have good dialogue with the Borough Commander on this and she has discussed this situation with members in recent scrutiny panels. The decision does lie solely with MOPAC however.

Supplementary

Thank you Madam Mayor and I thank the Cabinet Member for her answer to my question and my supplementary is to ask the Cabinet Member whether she shares our joy that following the Labour Mayor of London's decision to close the Wimbledon Police Station that it now looks as though the Conservatives have saved the Wimbledon Police Station by the introduction of more police officers into Merton and into London and would the Cabinet Member further agree that this proves that however regrettable, the real decision makers are the Conservatives and the Labour party and that's it? Thank you.

Reply

Thank you Councillor Holmes for your supplementary question. The main issue here was your Government who made all these cuts to the police officers, we share the same sentiments; we want Wimbledon Police Station to be kept open, we don't want it closed but because of the way Government did cuts to police officers, we don't have bobbies on the beat anymore and we need all these officers to be seen around the streets of Wimbledon and so we want the Police Station to be kept open and you have done nothing and we're working with the Mayor I was at the judicial review hearing when it was heard in the City of London and I heard what the judge said so it's up to the Government now to provide the money to let us have the police officers which he's pontificating and let us have more bobbies on the beat.

From Councillor Nick Draper to the Cabinet member for Voluntary Sector, Partnerships and Community Safety

Anti-social behaviour is a barrier to creating and sustaining a more vibrant night time economy. Can the Cabinet member outline what measures exist to tackle this?

Reply

The Safer Merton service are leading on ASB and ASB enforcement but are a small team of two officers. The officers work in geographically defined areas and are working

closely with police and others to tackle ASB related matters using powers available to them.

The team are using Community Protection Warnings, Community Protection Notices against problematic people, have closed premises under ASB legislation and have the power to use injunctions where necessary.

Merton was part of a two year scheme with the Home Office aimed at reducing alcohol related violence, where this scheme was focused on the NTE the work was successful in reducing incidents of violence but to create a healthy night time economy requires a lot of joint work.

Supplementary

Thank you very much Madam Mayor. I have a supplementary question; I always appreciate, I'm sure we all do, the work that our small Safer Merton team and the police do in keeping our streets safe at night despite the cuts that the Conservative Government have forced upon them, but in her estimation how damaging have the Conservative Government's cuts to the Met Police been to tackling that Anti-Social Behaviour in Merton? Thank you very much.

Reply

Thank you to Councillor Draper for his supplementary question. You're quite spot-on, it has been very damaging by the Tory Government by cutting the number of Police officers and this has caused a lot of anti-social behaviour but we are very proud in Merton that we are the 4th safest Borough in the whole of London and we're doing all we can in Safer Merton, we're working with our partners, we're working with voluntary organisations to ensure that we keep people safe and the main priority when we were elected as Councillors is to keep the public safe.

From Councillor Paul Kohler to the Cabinet Member for Voluntary Sector, Partnerships and Community Safety

Please can the Cabinet Member provide detail of partnerships the council has built with third sector organisations on crime prevention – particularly relating to young people, but also more broadly, including any outcomes or metrics that we keep track of as part of that. This can include grant giving, any memorandums of understanding, other more informal partnerships or regular meetings?

Reply

The Community Safety Partnership (CSP) in Merton is strong. Alongside statutory partners of Police, LFB and the council the quarterly meeting has attendees from CCG, public health, housing, third sector and community all present. The strongest CSPs are ones that looks, and address, both qualitative and quantitative matters as statistics alone do not always reflect the impacts of crime and ASB on the community as a whole

The CSP has, underneath it, a range of working groups which work on the delivery work against its priorities, such as burglary, violence, hate crime, vehicle crime etc. All of these working groups are made up of numerous partners which include third sector organisations.

A good example of clear third sector working comes via Merton's hate crime working group. As one of the strongest sub groups to the CSP the meeting is chaired by third sector and has third sector agencies attending who cover each strand of hate crime but there are many more examples.

Beyond the CSP, across the council a lot of organisations are engaged with us in relation to crime prevention work. This work includes groups going into schools, undertaking outreach and engagement. This work can be commissioned through the council but may also come via additional funding streams outside of the councils remit. These other means of funding are not always known to the council and bids are not always passed through the council prior to award. Over the recent past organisations have been able to bid for funds from a range of partners including partners such as the GLA, MOPAC, the mayors Violence Reduction Unit, and the Home Office etc. In order to try and build an understanding of the networked provision we work with partners such as those listed above to have oversight on where grants are provided as we try and ensure that we are aware of what money is being invested within the borough

Our focus is on outcomes and as such the metrics used are those in the annual Action plan to reduce crime and the fear of crime. Our partnership work with voluntary sector partners breaks these down in to a broad range of actions and measurements relating to the specific areas of work.

Supplementary

Thank you Madam Mayor and thank you Councillor Macauley for your comprehensive answer to my question. Given that reducing the fear of crime is one of the key outcomes in the Business Plan, do you think we as a Borough are doing enough in the Restorative Justice field and what opportunities do you see for us working with third sector providers to improve our provision?

Reply

I think what we are doing in Merton as I mentioned before, we have a team of officers who are working very hard in Safer Merton to ensure that we continue to work with all our partners to ensure that we keep people safe in the Borough, our hands are tied – the Government provides the money. So we are allocated what we can do and we do our best to ensure what we can do is to make sure that people are kept safe in the Borough as the fear of crime is a very important issue to a lot of residents in the community and a lot of people I speak to are very worried especially older people and vulnerable people, so our aim is to ensure that we keep people safe and we do all we can in Safer Merton to take measures to satisfy our residents in this Borough.

Councillor Aidan Mundy to the Cabinet Member for Finance

Can the Cabinet member please reassure our much-valued EU citizen residents of the ongoing help and support they will receive during what will be a destabilising transition period between now and the end of December 2020?

Reply

We consider that everyone who lives in Merton is helping to make it a great place for families. We want to make sure that our European friends, neighbours and family members in Merton are getting the Settled Status their contribution to our community deserves. We do not want our community broken up, and are urging all residents who want to remain living here to apply as soon as possible for Settled Status.

The council has been promoting the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) since it opened to make sure that our EU residents can continue enjoying their right to live and work in the UK. Advice and guidance on the scheme, and contact details of organisations which provide advice have been published in My Merton and on a dedicated Brexit webpage <https://www.merton.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/brexit>

Leaflets and posters translated into all the EU languages have been distributed to advice providers in the borough. The council, via MVSC, has sent out bulletins to promote the EU Settlement Scheme to EU residents through the voluntary sector.

We are particularly concerned about vulnerable EU residents. To reach out to those vulnerable groups funding has been provided to Citizens Advice Merton and Lambeth (CAML) to deliver specialist EU Settlement Scheme advice services. The Association for Polish Family has also received funding from the council to support Eastern European residents to apply to the scheme, in addition to offering a free ID scanning service. South West London Law Centre (SWLLC) are another local organization which are providing legal advice on the scheme when cases are proving to be more complex. These organisations have now delivered advice to thousands of EU residents.

Caroline Holland, the council's Brexit Lead, has written to all the EU residents who are on the electoral register to encourage them to apply to the scheme well before the deadline. A scanning service is available at the Registry Office. On Brexit Day itself the Leader of the Council took part in an advice surgery with our advice providers in Morden Library on the EUSS.

We are working closely with our children in care and reaching out to care leavers to ensure they do not lose their right to remain in the UK. The Council is engaging with schools, other community groups, and local businesses to reach out to EU residents who still haven't secured their rights under the EU Settlement scheme. We are also encouraging EU citizens who work for the council to apply to the EUSS and advice is also available to them from Citizens Advice.

Supplementary

Thank you Madam Mayor and I thank the Cabinet Member for his very detailed response. Can I just follow up and ask; throughout the transition period how does he plan to continue communicating with our very valuable EU friends who live in the Borough?

Reply

I'd like to thank Councillor Mundy for his question and his follow-up. We will continue to provide help to our residents with EU backgrounds and there's a number of things we've been doing you've seen the banners outside the Civic Centre showing support for them, you've seen the workshops that we've done with partners and such, citizens advice, the Polish community and the South London Legal Partnership, sorry the South West London Law Centres, I apologise. This is a troubling period, we're already starting to see an element of gaslighting towards EU Citizens living in the Borough – we saw it after the initial referendum that crime and hate crime against EU citizens increased and what worries me is this tone that we're starting to see now of people who are starting to say that if we're not making a success of it, it's due to people who are unhappy that we're going ahead with this. People from the European Union are unhappy about us leaving the European Union, they've put down their roots here, they love being part of Britain and they're unhappy. Now they're being told if they're not positive, if they don't move forward, if they don't come together then somehow they will be to blame for all of Britain's ills in the future, that's not right. The future ills of this country are fully 100% down to the hard Brexiteers such as the Leader of the Opposition.

From Councillor Omar Bush to the Cabinet Member for Voluntary Sector, Partnerships and Community Safety:

Since Sadiq Kahn became Mayor of London knife crime has increased by over 50%, what steps has the Cabinet Member taken to prevent knife crime in Merton?

Reply

The Council and the Community Safety Partnership are working hard to ensure that Merton remains a safe borough. We have a knife crime plan which sets out a range of work covering prevention initiatives through to enforcement, we are working collaboratively to safeguard young people and young adults who become affected by knife crime and the community at large

Merton has been innovative in its work with community groups undertaking knife sweeps in areas of concern to the community and training residents, businesses etc. prior to sweeps to educate them

The borough remains the 4th safest in the Metropolitan area and we are committed to delivering work to maintain this position

We are concerned about the increase but 50% relates to a lower starting level, however this doesn't diminish the risk and need to respond. It is worth noting however that knife crime incidents, as reported to police, do not break down where a knife is used to commit a crime. Knife crime incidents include where knives are intimidated, seen and used. For all of knife incidents in Merton roughly 25% see a knife produced but we are committed to working with all partners to safeguard the residents of the borough.

Supplementary

Thank you Madam Mayor. Can I thank the Cabinet Member for her answer. Does she agree with me that the Conservative Government's plans to fund 6000 more police officers in London represents the best way of removing the scourge of knife crime from our streets?

Reply

Thank you Councillor Bush for your supplementary question. As I mentioned before Safer Merton has a knife-crime plan which sets out a range of work covering prevention, we had a knife crime event in the Summer and it was attended by so many people. We had the views of a partnership and also BAME groups to see what can be done to prevent knife crime. The Government has made so many cuts and it's been very difficult for us in Safer Merton, but we have very good officers who are doing a brilliant job to ensure that the residents of this Borough are kept safe at all times.

From Councillor Joan Henry to the Cabinet Member for Children's Services

Can the Cabinet Member please explain how the newly recommissioned Risk and Resilience Service help to improve the safety of our young residents?

Reply

The Integrated Young People's Risk and Resilience Service incorporates prevention of and interventions for substance misuse, missing (home or care), exploitation, poor sexual health and also street-based youth work for young people aged 24 and under. The new arrangements have enabled us to target young people with swift interventions and provide more holistic prevention packages for young people who have a range of needs. As part of the recommissioning we have expanded the coverage of exploitation from child sexual exploitation to include child criminal exploitation as well. The procurement process embedded the council's long standing commitment to young to encourage their participation in service delivery and design. We therefore involved a small group of 3 young people from across Merton, including service users, who were recruited and trained as 'Young Commissioners'. Their input helped us to secure the most suitable service provider. The newly recommissioned service therefore helps to improve the safety of our young residents by holistically addressing a number of key issues that they face, and by doing so in a way that has been assessed by young people as best meeting their needs.

Supplementary

Thank you Madam Mayor. I would like to thank the Cabinet Member for her response. What more can be done to ensure that young people in our Borough remain safe?

Reply

Thank you to Councillor Henry for her supplemental question. I must say that is a very big question and probably more than can be done to answer it in the short time I have. What I'd say is that it starts with supporting parents to keep their children safe and moves through to creating welcoming communities with positive opportunities and healthy alternatives to crime and as well as reduced risks for them. I think we need to focus on the things that the young people say themselves that they fear which includes things like knife crime, drug dealing but also they'd like us to help them to build better relationships with the Police. So all of that is encompassed in our Children and Young People's Plan which we'll be working through. Thank you.

From Councillor Jenifer Gould to the Cabinet Member for Voluntary Sector, Partnerships and Community Safety

To reduce reliance on cars parents say they need to feel their children are safe on their school journeys if walking or cycling. Given the climate change is at the top of the agenda, can the Cabinet Member say what improvements they are planning on roads and cycle paths, with street lighting, and lighting dark alley ways to bus stops so that children can feel safe on their journeys to and from schools?

Reply

The Council attempts to work with all schools on an annual basis. This work includes establishing and maintaining school travel plans and road safety education. Apart from soft measures, the Council also considers any concerns schools may have about safety and access. In addition to these programmes. The Council has secured additional funding to improve Public Rights Way and as a result we are concentrating on those that are used by school pupils. The improvements will include surfacing, drainage and lighting.

Supplementary

Thank you Madam Mayor. The Council says it wants a strong focus on the voice of the child and young person. Could the Cabinet Member commit to doing just that with a consultation with the Youth Parliament, school children, school groups and take up their recommendations for improved planning on roads and cycle paths improved street lighting and lighting dark alleyways to bus stops so that the children and young people can feel safe on their journeys to and from school. Thank you.

Reply

It's something we actually do already do in terms of school travel plans but of course you know going forward we do work very closely with all our schools and keeping them safe but also as well encouraging them to use sustainable forms of transport, coupled with our road safety, I'm confident that we do a good job. Clearly going forward we obviously do work closely with the Youth Council and the schools to see if any further improvements can actually be made. Thank you.

Councillor Mary Curtin to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport

Can the Cabinet member please update on the roll out of 20mph across the borough, and how it has been impacting on road safety?

Reply

The council has been introducing 20mph speed limit throughout the borough in phases. The statutory consultation for the last phase started on 30th January 2020. It is envisaged that all the works will be completed by April 2020.

The objective is to change driver behaviour – that is to say encourage drivers to travel at a consistent lower speed not just throughout the borough but from borough to borough. Merton's limit will work alongside neighbouring borough's 20mph speed limits. This is expected to bring about a cultural change so that it is socially unacceptable to drive over 20mph in London. This is part of delivering the Mayor of London and Transport for London's 'Vision Zero' objectives of reducing serious road injuries to zero.

It will take time for some drivers to fully appreciate the speed limit and change their behaviour. As currently speed and other driving offences can only be enforced by the police, they have records of the number of speed related offenses which is yet to be shared with individual Councils; London boroughs have been advised by the police that they do enforce 20mph speed limit and residents are also encouraged to access Community RoadWatch that is operated by TfL and the police. Community Roadwatch is a road safety initiative which aims to reduce speeding in residential areas, and gives local residents the opportunity to work side by side with their local police teams, and use speed detection equipment to identify speeding vehicles in their communities. Members of the public can contact Roadsafe London directly. This portal is an information and intelligence gathering tool that can inform police activity. The following link shows the address for the Roadsafe London website - <http://content.met.police.uk/Site/roadsafelondon>

The impact will be assessed by considering reports received from road users, police and accident records.

In terms of benefits, it is considered that with a change in behaviour, there will be less aggressive driver behaviour; less likelihood of accidents; improved perception of safety; safer highway environment / experience for all vulnerable road users. Studies show that compared to 30mph, not only are the number of accidents reduced in 20mph roads, but also their severity. For instance, a pedestrian sustaining a fatal injury from a collision decreases from approximately 55% at an impact speed of 30mph to 17% at an impact speed on 20mph. There are also health benefits, as lower speeds help improve physical and mental health. As roads become safer so people are more inclined to walk and cycle more, providing regular exercise and enabling healthier lifestyles. Air and noise pollution are also reduced at 20mph and these measures support sustainable transport options and encourage modal shift. There are many studies that can be found on TfL's website.

Supplementary

Thank you Madam Mayor. I would like to ask the Cabinet Member what further steps are being taken to improve road safety in the Borough?

Reply

Clearly in terms of 20 mile per hour zones we are glad in terms of the progress that has actually been made in terms of that. We do believe it makes our roads safer and we look forward to the completion of the rollout shortly. Thank you.