

# **Merton Council Council**

**12 April 2017**

## **Supplementary agenda**

24 Councillor Non Priority Questions and Answers

1 - 8

This page is intentionally left blank

Councillor non priority questions

**41.From Cllr David Dean to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Environment and Housing:**

Given the Council believe the polluter should pay and diesel vehicles are not welcome in Merton, can the Cabinet Member tell me:

- a) How many diesel vehicles do the Council have?
- b) How many diesel vehicles have been procured since 2010?
- c) What is the amount of pollution that is emitted from these vehicles?
- d) What is the plan to replace them with electric vehicles?

**Reply**

The Council currently has 96 vehicles in its fleet, this includes one plug-in electric vehicle, which is used as a pool car and one hybrid electric-petrol car, which is the Mayor's vehicles and six petrol cars. The remaining 88 vehicles are diesel. The vast majority of the diesel vehicles are buses or vans rather than cars.

Since 2010, 58 diesel vehicles were purchased for use across the Council as they were considered to be the most cost-effective and efficient option. In addition, 42 vehicles were purchased for use on the waste collection and street cleaning service. Vehicles required for these services are generally diesel powered as alternatively fuelled vehicles are currently not readily available in the marketplace.

The work on emissions is currently being undertaken as part of a review of our in-house fleet which will also consider the carbon dioxide and nitrous oxide emissions of any replacement vehicles with an aim to reduce these as much as possible whilst still delivering value for money for our residents. The review will also look at the possibility of reducing vehicle numbers along with the use electric and hybrid vehicles when electric options are not available.

**45.From Councillor Abdul Latif to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Environment and Housing:**

Residents of Trinity Ward have expressed their concerns to me about the on-going plight of rough sleepers in Wimbledon Town Centre.

For local residents the presence of rough sleepers in Wimbledon Town Centre can be rather disturbing and intimidating. For example, there have been complaints of anti-social behaviour (ASB), defecating/urinating and taking of drugs/illegal substances.

Can the Cabinet Member please tell us what practical measures are being taken by the Council to address rough sleeping in the Borough and the problems that can be associated with it?

**Reply**

The council is committed, together with its partners, to reduce the incidences of rough sleeping. The Council works closely with London Street Rescue to visit sleep sites and to offer advice and assistance to rough sleepers.

## Councillor non priority questions

Assistance offered includes:

- 1/ accompanying new rough sleepers to a pan London "No Second Night" assessment hub
- 2/ accompanying rough sleepers to the Faith in Action Drop in sessions on Wednesday and Fridays where they can access advice and assistance, as well having access to washing facilities and food
- 3/ Referral of cases to the Council's Rough Sleepers Multi-Agency Working Panel. Attendees include Safe Merton, Police, and Housing Services
4. Assessment under Housing Act 1996 Part 7 (Homeless Legislation)

It is however worth noting that some rough sleepers choose not to engage with Statutory Services and London Street Rescue and it may take some time to gain their trust and for them to accept assistance.

Lastly, the Council has very recently been awarded some funding from the Department Of Communities and Local Government to improve services for Rough sleepers which will include establishing an outreach service with local partners.

### **46.From Councillor Abdul Latif to the Cabinet Member for Street Cleanliness and Parking:**

Merton Council was awarded funding from Resource London recently to run an incentive scheme in the Colliers Wood/South Wimbledon area to try and increase levels of food waste recycling. What were the results of this and has it lead to a sustained increase in levels of food waste recycling across the 3 collection rounds impacted?

### **Reply**

Last year waste services undertook a controlled food waste collection trial in the Colliers Wood area.

This was funded by Resource London with the overarching aim to increase participation in food waste recycling. This complemented the 'Love Food Hate Waste' campaign and aimed to reduce the stigma around recycling food waste, which is often viewed as being unpleasant to collect as a separate waste stream.

An analysis of the data captured over 3 months has shown a measurable and sustained increase of food waste from households within the trial area. On average 1.4kg per household compared to only 1.1kg per household before the trial.

The next stage of this workstream is to assess the cost benefit analysis of options to promote and engage with residents on the benefits of recycling food waste.

### **47.From Councillor David Williams to the Leader of the Council:**

Councillor non priority questions

Would the Leader please list the meetings and correspondence he has had since the last ordinary meeting of the Council on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2017 to save St Helier Hospital?

### **Reply**

Since I last responded to his question in early February I have:

- Met with Andrew Murray, Chair of the CCG, in February, and re-stated our objection to any downgrade of St Helier hospital
- Appeared on the front page of the Wimbledon Guardian under the headline “We’re Standing up for St Helier” where I have appealed to residents to attend the meeting about the STP on 13 April and to let the local NHS know that we will not agree to any downgrade of St Helier hospital
- Addressed a coffee morning in Ravensbury ward where I raised the need to support St Helier hospital and took questions on the campaign to save the hospital
- Held a similar coffee morning in Cannon Hill ward where I again outlined our campaign to save St Helier and encouraged residents to get involved.

### **48.From Councillor Stephen Crowe to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Environment and Housing:**

As the Cabinet Member will recall, there was extensive flooding in June 2016 in Raynes Park and vehicles could not drive through the Raynes Park Bridge tunnel. Could the Cabinet Member please outline what has subsequently been done by the Council, Thames Water and the Environment Agency to ensure that there will be no flooding in the tunnel this year?

### **Reply**

Raynes Park Bridge tunnel is a historic and designated high probability surface water flooding location as shown on the Environment Agency’s published surface water risk maps, which are available online. In terms of levels, the road dips down under the bridge and creates a natural bowl for water, taking surface water flow from Coombe Lane, Pepys Road and Kingston Road. A large proportion of surface water flow is received from the higher ground in and around Cottenham Park and Copse Hill, which flows towards the town centre. New pumps and more road gullies were installed at the underbridge, following the 20th July 2007 extreme flooding which affected many areas across the borough, as it did across the Country. The pump in the Raynes Park bridge drains perform well under normal rainfall circumstances and has significantly improved the situation compared to before 2007. Residents will have seen in the media that there are numerous railway under bridges across South West London that are frequently affected by significant flooding due to their low lying nature, including Wallington, New Malden and Battersea. In fact flood depths recorded in these locations were greater than that experienced in Raynes Park underbridge in the same June 23rd 2016 extreme rainfall event.

## Councillor non priority questions

We experienced an exceptional amount of rainfall in an incredibly short period of time on the 23rd June 2016 and in most locations the drains and sewers simply aren't designed to take that much water in that short space of time. More road gullies would not have accommodated this rainfall, we are limited by the size of the receiving Thames Water sewer in Kingston Road which was exceeded.

Merton Council has undertaken cleansing of gullies in identified 'higher risk' areas on an annual basis, where appropriate funding has made available – the higher risk areas are based on those roads that were reported as (i) flooding during the 20th July 2007 surface water flooding event, (ii) identified as being at risk according to Environment Agency surface water modelling or (iii) to have previous recorded or reported drainage problems. Raynes Park railway bridge is covered by the high risk gully cleansing programme, which also includes Coombe Lane, Kingston Road, Pepys Road and Worple Road. In addition, Merton also undertakes reactive gully cleansing to specific locations or addresses throughout the year following reports by residents or businesses. Raynes Park town centre and nearby other roads, including the apostles roads, had a further proactive clean a few days prior to the flood event on the 23rd June 2016.

### **49.From Councillor Daniel Holden to the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health:**

What is the council doing in Merton to support adults with Motor Neurone Disease?

### **Reply**

Public Health Merton works closely with Merton CCG on a number of areas. One of the priority areas identified by the CCG was around neurological conditions some years ago. In response, Public Health Merton undertook a detailed health needs assessment and this included MND. The link to the HNA can be found at: [http://www.merton.gov.uk/merton\\_long\\_term\\_neurological\\_conditions\\_hna.pdf](http://www.merton.gov.uk/merton_long_term_neurological_conditions_hna.pdf)

The CCG commissions support for people with neurological conditions, including MND, as part of its contract with Central London Community Healthcare NHS Trust for community services provision. This includes provision of a multi-disciplinary team which provides assessment, intervention, rehabilitation and education, and includes speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, specialist nursing and rehabilitation assistants.

In addition the service has access to other CCG commissioned services including specialist medical input dietetics, continence assessment, and psychological, cognition assessment and specialist input.

It is also recognised that social care is essential to ensure each person's needs are met and the service is expected to liaise with social workers as appropriate.

Councillor non priority questions

**50.From Councillor Adam Bush to the Cabinet Member for Finance:**

Since this policy was introduced, how much income has so far been generated by the council through the hiring out of meeting rooms in the Civic Centre, including the Council Chamber, to external groups and stakeholders?

**Reply**

A revised policy for the use of Civic centre meeting and Committee rooms has been introduced along with an electronic booking system (Matrix) and the centralised management of meeting room facilities and equipment.

As part of phase 1 of the process, clarification and guidance has now been provided in respect to who can book/use council facilities and where appropriate what the charge rates for those would be.

Phase 2, which relates to the implementation of a charging policy has not been introduced at present and therefore not generated any income, but is something that will be kept under review and implemented if our capacity to provide meeting rooms becomes an issue in the future. In the interim, however, there have been no bookings for external groups or stakeholders.

**51.From Councillor Gilli Lewis-Lavender to the Cabinet Member for Street Cleanliness and Parking:**

How does the Cabinet Member expect to increase food waste recycling when Merton residents can't even guarantee to be able to get their 6 month supply of food waste caddy liners from their local library any longer?

**Reply**

The provision and distribution of food waste liners historically cost the council in excess of £130k. Despite being delivered to all households, only an estimated c52% of residents participated in the service. This cost was reduced to £67k by removing the individual deliveries and supplying the liners via our libraries. An analysis of the demand suggests that c5% of residents are choosing to collect their free bags from our libraries with the majority of residents opting to provide their own liners.

We are continuing to review our disposal arrangements with our contractor and will look at alternative options for the lining of food caddies.

**52.From Councillor Gilli Lewis-Lavender to the Cabinet Member for Children's Services:**

Given recent reports about the latest drug craze whereby some young people are seeking to get high from the plastic fumes produced by burning wheelie bins, what public health assessment has the Council made of the increased risks posed to Merton's young people as a result of the introduction of multiple wheelie bins across the whole borough?

**Reply**

It is regrettable that some newspapers have reported that a craze which was reported 10 years ago may have re-emerged with some young people, although we are not aware of this happening in Merton or any of our neighbouring boroughs and this would be unlawful behaviour. A wheeled bin service is not expected in Merton until October 2018 and we will work with our contractor Veolia and with Public Health to seek to ensure that the risks of any such behaviour are known and minimised in advance of implementation and that any such unlawful activity is dealt with appropriately.

**53.From Councillor Suzanne Grocott to the Cabinet Member for Street Cleanliness and Parking:**

I have had a resident contact me whose landlord does not allow wheelie bins. This resident has been paying for green waste collection but the landlord asked them to remove the green waste wheelie bin. Whilst this resident can currently move over to bags for green waste, what will he do when he has to have wheelie bins under the proposed, new waste collection arrangements?

**Reply**

It is recognised that the approach to waste collection cannot be a “one size fits all”, uniform approach and that different container types and sizes will need to be considered for different property types. However, in order for collection processes to be as lean and efficient as possible, some standardisation will be required and any variation from the standard process would require justifiable reasons. Acceptable criteria to vary from the “norm” will need to be agreed in advance of any service being rolled out.

The new collection regime and wheeled bin service is intended to be more convenient for residents cleaner , cheaper and will encourage recycling. Landlords will be encouraged to reconsider any restrictions they currently have on wheeled bins. We hope they will see that the bins present an opportunity to store waste securely and reduce the risk of bags being torn open by animals and creating a mess. As a last resort, legislation under Section 46 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, does allow a waste collection authority to serve a legal notice on a household that does not comply with the system of waste collection provided but we would hope this would be unnecessary.

**54.From Councillor Suzanne Grocott to the Cabinet Member for Street Cleanliness and Parking:**

Please can the Cabinet Member tell me:

- a) How much green waste is collected now compared to when the service was not paid for (prior to 2011)?
- b) How many residents currently pay for green waste collection, and how does that compare to the figure prior to 2011?
- c) How is the green waste disposed of?
- d) How much does this service cost and does the revenue earned cover the cost?



## Reply

- a) In 2016/17 we are forecasting 3,996 tonnes of garden waste. This represents a slight decrease of 148 tonnes when compared to 2010/11. It is important to note that in 2010/11 the leafing material collected from the kerbside was included as part of our recycling performance. Under current legislation this material is not allowed to be processed and recycled and is currently required to go to landfill; this has affected our overall garden waste tonnage.
- b) Currently we have in excess of 6,000 customers subscribing to the chargeable garden waste service.
- c) All garden waste is disposed of at our contractor's facility at Beddington. It is processed and turned into soil improver/compost. Residents can collect this material free of charge from our recycling centre at Garth Road.
- d) The pricing structure for the garden waste is designed to ensure that the service fully recovers its operational cost, the current revenue budget for the service is £214k. This is covered by income.

### **55.From Councillor Suzanne Grocott to the Cabinet Member for Finance: Please can the Cabinet Member tell me:**

- a) How many people have resigned from the Council this year and what is this number as a proportion of the total workforce?
- b) How many people does the Council currently employ?
- c) What is the Council's policy on e-mail addresses for ex-employees?
- d) Is a standard response given to members of the public who try to send e-mails to ex-employees of the Council?

## Reply

- a) During 2017/18 there have been 170 resignations which equates to 8.75%
- b) 1869, excluding schools.
- c) Typically the manager requests an Out of Office for a period of time, then we disable the account or a redirection to another email box or immediate disablement of the email address
- d) Depends on the option selected by the manager as explained in c).

### **56.From Councillor Suzanne Grocott to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Environment and Housing:**

I have been looking at the latest update from Clarion Housing regarding the Ravensbury regeneration. One of the "comments" on page 5 of 9 is:

"Parking needs to be permit system due to non-residents using the road for parking" quoting the October 2016 consultation undertaken by the Council.

## Councillor non priority questions

Following responses from officers, it would appear that Clarion may be confused about what has actually been consulted upon. The October 2016 consultation was for waiting restrictions (i.e. double yellow lines at junctions) and not about introducing a controlled parking zone.

Please would the Cabinet Member:

- a) Confirm that no consultation for a CPZ in the Ravensbury Estate has been undertaken.
- b) Advise Clarion accordingly that they have misrepresented the situation within their literature and may as a result confuse and worry their residents.

## **Reply**

- a) It can be confirmed that the Council has not carried out a consultation on a CPZ and currently there are no plans for a CPZ in this area.
- b) The matter will be discussed with Clarion with a recommendation that they should clarify the situation with their residents.