

# **Merton Council Council**

**13 September 2017**

## **Supplementary agenda**

17 Supplementary Questions and Replies

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**From: Derek Manning**

**To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration Environment and Housing**

Does the Council agree the importance of preserving the few remaining aspects of Lord Nelson's estate in South Wimbledon? If so, will the Council agree to add the cottages from his estate at 34 - 40 Morden Road to its local listing of heritage assets?

**Reply**

Merton Council recognises the importance of heritage buildings and the contribution they make to the local character and quality of our neighbourhoods.

Morden Road cottages have been assessed for Local Listing but do not meet our established criteria. This assessment has been accepted by the cross-party Borough Plan Advisory Panel, Cabinet and Full Council in July council which decided agreed not to list Morden Road cottages.

The decision reports are available at  
<https://democracy.merton.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?AllId=7423>

The council does however recognise that the cottages have some heritage value and would encourage the sympathetic refurbishment of these cottages is so that they might be able to be positively considered for addition to the local List in the future.

**From: Nicholas Waring**

**To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration Environment and Housing**

Will the Council contact the owners of these buildings (The Parade, 284-296/319-333 Haydons Road) to encourage the enhancement of this part of the historic Haydon Park Estate, through the use of section 215 powers of the T&CP Act 1990, and creation of a Heritage Action Zone?

**Reply**

The use of 215 powers would only be relevant if the Council believed that the condition of the buildings posed a threat to public safety or caused significant harmful effects to the local area. We have not been formally made aware of any such issues for the Parade on Haydons Road.

Applications for Historic England's heritage action zone programme have closed but tend to be aimed at the revival of whole town centres or villages rather than individual parades.

The Council's regeneration team have a programme of shop-front improvement grants available to business who wish to improve their premises. This largely depends on the will of the building owners and business who we will approach.

**From: Richard Hilton**

**To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration Environment and Housing**

Have Merton Council and their partners, Clarion, checked who lives in affordable homes in the borough? Do you check if there is sub letting going on and how satisfied are you with the rigour of such checks. How does Merton ensure only those legally entitled to be here get access to these homes?

**Reply**

Clarion takes a robust approach to illegal sub letting and works closely with the south west London fraud partnership to tackle housing fraud. All tenants are required as a condition of their tenancy to occupy their homes as their main and principal home and if they fail, without reasonable reasons then an eviction can be sought through the courts. During 2016/17 there were 163 investigations of housing fraud carried out by Clarion and 12 properties were recovered.

The Council is also required to carry out relevant enquiries into relevant matters when a person seeks accommodation. These enquiries include checking whether a person is homeless, is not subject to certain immigration rules that deny them access to housing, has a priority need for accommodation, is not homeless intentionally and has a local connection with the authority.

**From: David Calliard**

**To the Cabinet Member for Street Cleanliness and Parking**

What concrete plans and actions do the Council have in place or considering to deal with the litter problem in our public places and residential streets. The situation has got worse over the last year. Inertia on this issue from our council has been staggering.

**Reply**

Research carried out by the Tidy Britain Group on behalf of the council, indicated that as much as 50% of all street waste arising in residential roads can be attributed to the black sack and box collection schemes operated within Merton. In October 2018 we will be introducing a wheelie bin collection service which will greatly reduce the level of street blown litter from the boxes and torn black sack waste created by foxes and other animals.

We have now contracted this service to Veolia who are responsible for ensuring that Town Centres and residential roads are swept to the required standard. The contractual standards for street cleaning reflect best practice from Defra's Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse. The contract is based on an output specification requiring the contractor maintain consistent standards across the entire borough. This is a move away from a frequency based approach where standards can fall between sweeps without any obligation on the contractor to resolve the issue.

To achieve this consistent standard of cleansing, Veolia use a number of different methods of cleaning the streets and alter the frequency depending on the footfall and

littering of the area concerned. Street operatives conduct manual litter picking and broom sweeping alongside mechanical and electrical sweepers which provide an efficient and effective way to lift litter and detritus from Merton's streets.

In order to hold the contractor to account we have created a new Neighbourhood Client Team who undertake site inspections and work closely with the contractor's Area Managers to ensure that service standards are maintained and any rectifications are addressed in line with our contractual agreements. They also undertake visits and walk-about with local ward Members who have concerns about littering in their area in order to address the issues in a proactive manner.

Clearly residents and visitors to Merton also have a responsibility to keep the borough clean. We continually run communications campaigns to remind them of their responsibilities as well as highlighting the potential fines for littering. We use our own Enforcement Officers to issue fixed penalty notices to discourage littering as well as using an Environmental Enforcement Contract to focus on high footfall areas in our town centres.

Local Members and communities will also be aware that we encourage and support community litter picks to enhance the boroughs' cleansing programme. We also work with other land owners and partners such as Housing Associations to clear their land and maintain a high standard of cleansing across the borough.

**From: Tung Shun Leung**  
**To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration Environment and Housing**

At the moment the Morden regeneration plans include the Baitul Futuh Mosque. Is it likely it will be demolished?

**Reply**

The Baitul Futuh Mosque in Morden currently has permission to demolish the fire-damaged parts of the building facing London Road. This is to clear the site, ready for re-building.

There are pre-planning discussions underway with the Council for the re-building of the mosque but it is completely separate from Morden's regeneration plans.

**From:Sandra Vogel**  
**To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration Environment and Housing**

What is the methodology for assessing the economic, social and environmental impact of the new bus street through Mitcham town centre, what baseline is being used to measure the relative success of the bus street and when will this assessment will be published?

**Reply**

The council will use data gathered as at the start of the rediscover Mitcham project which also formed part of the TfL business case. The review will not be conducted until after the project has ended, and a suitable monitoring period has passed. It's anticipated this will be undertaken mid-late 2018.

**From: Gemma Illsley**

**To the Cabinet Member for Street Cleanliness and Parking**

Is it possible to, and if so how do we, apply for funding for planters on the corner of Haydon Park Road and Haydons Road?

**Reply**

Please contact [future.merton@merton.gov.uk](mailto:future.merton@merton.gov.uk) with details of the proposal. Our Regeneration and Highways team will consider the feasibility, maintenance and any funding opportunities available to assist with the request.

**From: Tony Burton**

**To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration Environment and Housing**

To ask Merton Council whether it will provide a map and details of the area of green space in Mitcham town centre to be registered as Town Green as part of Rediscover Mitcham and a timetable for this registration?

**Reply**

The registration of the green spaces is not currently the main priority at this stage of the Rediscover Mitcham project as we focus on completing the roadworks and public realm upgrades. As part of the project we have made a commitment to protect the new green spaces and will do so post-construction. The task will be added to the work programme towards the end of 2018.

**From: John Davis**

**To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration Environment and Housing**

Will Merton Council identify the Tree Preservation Orders in force in

(a) Cricket Green ward and

(b) Mitcham Cricket Green Conservation Area,

and ensure that all planning applications, before being assessed, accurately show tree species and positions on submitted plans?

**Reply**

A list of all our TPO's are available to view on the website. If from this list there are any particular ones that Mr. Davis would like to see the map of the TPO, then he can view them via Merton Link who keep copies of all the TPOs.

In terms of accuracy of tree plans, we endeavour to ensure that applicant's provide an arboricultural impact assessment and tree survey. The excerpt always includes an accurate plan showing the locations of all the trees.

**From: Anthony Fairclough**  
**To the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance**

Enabling residents to quickly and easily report problems in their area is key to a well-run council, yet I was recently told that Merton's online "report it" page is not "fully integrated", nor "fully operational". How long has this been the case and when will it be fixed?

### **Reply**

Our aim, in line with our Customer Contact and IT Strategies, is that any request made through the website reaches the service area or contractor as quickly as possible and in many cases almost immediately in real-time through the integration of IT systems. Some processes are currently fully integrated and link with the contractors' systems – several were rolled out over the latter half of last year and early part of this year. Others are still in development with a plan in place for high volume requests to be integrated by the new year. In the meantime work-around procedures are in place to ensure the contractor receives the request in a timely manner and acts on it. We welcome reports from our residents and encourage them to use our on-line reporting forms which are designed to be easier and more convenient to use than phoning the Council.

**From: Mrs Nicola Thompson**  
**To the Cabinet Member for Street Cleanliness and Parking**

In the five years I have lived nearby, I have never seen a car club vehicle using the allocated 'car club' space at the Haydons Road end of Cromwell Road. At what point will this space be made available for residents' parking instead, which is in short supply here?

### **Reply**

In Merton (end of July 2017) there were in excess of 3450 car club members in the borough. This represents a 50% year on year increase in the number of Members in the borough. This was largely driven by the recent launch of Zip Car flex. More broadly across the boroughs where Zipcar Flex is operating at present (Merton, Wandsworth, Lambeth and Southwark) there are now around 40,000 Zipcar members. Flexi members can also use vehicles parked in dedicated car club bays. Other major operators such as Enterprise Car and DriveNow are also expected to expand their operations across London, including Merton over the coming year.

It should be noted that many car club members choose to give up a vehicle thereby reducing car ownership and potentially reducing traffic congestion. Car club members also drive less. Indeed, independent surveys indicate that each flexible car club car can replace 13.4 vehicles from the road. Car club vehicles are also cleaner

and on average produce 29% less CO2 than private vehicles so have less impact on air quality.

Given the expansion and success of car clubs, the council has no plans to remove any existing facilities. It should be noted that car clubs do monitor their vehicle activity / usage and any reported inactivity is addressed accordingly.

**From: Andrew Boyce**

**To the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance**

There is much anger at this Council's contempt for South Wimbledon's heritage by effectively gifting Merton Hall to a church for its own political ends. At the time of writing, a petition has amassed some 1800 signatures. Given current public opposition, will the Council now abandon this ludicrous proposal?

**Reply**

The Council, at present has no plans to abandon the proposals for Merton Hall as it is part of a wider project to create essential school places for our borough. We recognise, however, that there is substantial support for the fantastic work of the Elim church, including running the borough's foodbank, and that this work will be able to continue if the application is approved. We also recognise the massive support for a new secondary school, which will be located at the Elim church's current site should this application be approved. We believe that the application is sympathetic to the existing purpose of Merton Hall, which is to provide community services for the borough, and note that the plans have had a glowing "green" report from the borough's design review panel, which is in itself an unusual occurrence and is very welcome, and demonstrates that supporters of the scheme are very conscious of South Wimbledon's heritage, which includes providing sensitively-designed, high-quality buildings that help deliver charitable services for the least off in the borough.

We await the outcome of Planning Application Committee with reference to Merton Hall specifically. To date we have not received the petitions that have been drafted in favour and against the application, and signed by people living inside and outside of the borough, but will consider their merits once submitted as part of the application.

**Supplementary**

Thank you Madam Mayor, it is always nice to be here in this chamber. I'll keep this question short to make it easy for Councillor Allison; it requires a yes or no answer. Does he recognize that if this Council approves the Planning application that will seek the demolition of Merton Hall next week, that the battle to save it will not be over, it will only have just begun, thank you.

**Reply**

Thank you to Mr Boyce for his follow-up and the threat that lies within it. I'm very disappointed in that kind of approach being taken in a Council Chamber that he claims to enjoy being in. If he respects the authority of Merton Council then he must



accept the decisions of Merton Council, and I'm particularly disappointed in him for giving credence in his question to a petition which we have not actually received, but which I have googled to find out what it says; and it's on the notorious 38 degrees site, which is very good at farming signatures for petitions from all over the country not necessarily from locally. What is disturbing to me is the language that is used as being so unfair about an application that is a very good one. It describes how John Innes' 1899 beautiful Merton Hall escaped World War 2 bombings unscathed but is about to be flattened by Merton Council's demolition squad. He should be ashamed of being associated with that language; in no way whatsoever is what is being proposed to flatten a very important hall. It is to respect it and to make sure it is used for its' purpose which is to provide entertainment and community use for our community. It is severely underused at the moment; the Elim Church is a marvellous organization; it provides the Foodbank service to Wimbledon. They would be great addition to that location and I very much hope that it goes ahead because not only if that happens would it be very good for Merton Hall but it would mean that the School which everyone in this Borough wants to see, will go ahead in South Wimbledon.

**From: Edward Gretton**

**To the Cabinet Member for Street Cleanliness and Parking**

Parking meters/ticket machines across the Borough require exact coins, returning neither change, nor crediting full parking time when excess payments are made. Will the Council immediately end this practice and ensure all meters/machines return the correct change, or alternatively credit the full and proper parking time against monies paid.

**Reply**

The pay and display machines currently in use throughout the London Borough of Merton cannot be configured to give change. Moving to machines that can give customers change would require replacing all of the pay and display machines throughout the borough. The cost of this would exceed £1m.

In addition, change giving machines would require engineers to be available to rectify machine faults at all times the machines are in operation which is from 5.00am to 11pm Monday to Saturday and 8am to 6pm on Sundays. The expected cost to this would be in excess of £100k pa.

Overpayments can be made as it is understood that motorists may not always have the correct change for parking. Because motorists are not permitted to park and then seek change, allowing overpayments allows motorists to pay for the time they require.

All on street pay and display machines operate on a linear price structure. This means that if the cost to park at a location is 1 pence per minute, and a motorist pays using a £1 because that is the only coin they have, they will receive 100 minutes of parking time, subject to any maximum stay restrictions.

Pay and Display machines in council run car parks do not currently operate linear price structures, however, this is currently under review.

In response to requests from member of the public for other payment options to use when using pay and display parking, motorists are able to use the Ringo pay by phone service to purchase time at pay and display locations, both on and off street, throughout the borough.

### **Supplementary**

Thank you Madam Mayor. My question relates to the Pay and Display machines which of course are across the Borough in the Council Car Parks that are taking money from our residents and of course not always giving them the full change or full credit. Of course the technology is available to give full credit on their pound coins in the meters. One of the Council's very important statutory duties is a regulator of Trading standards, and one of the obligations is to ensure no unfair instances of overcharging and overpayments. On that basis Madam Mayor could the Cabinet Member kindly explain why he considers it fair or lawful for these Pay and Display Parking machines to continue to take such significant overpayments from the residents of Merton on a daily basis? Thank you.

### **Reply**

I'd like to thank Mr Gretton for his question and his follow-up and congratulate him on his selection as a Conservative Candidate for Wimbledon Park. I thought that we'd detailed many of the points that he has raised in his supplementary in the original answer and I wish him all the best for the election.

**From: Phil Ling**

**To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration Environment and Housing**

Council figures state that from April 2016 to March 2017, 260 social housing properties were let. How many new households joined the Housing Register during that same period?

### **Reply**

During the period, April 2016/2017 1079 new households joined the Housing Register.

**From: Emily Robertson**

**To the Cabinet Member for Education**

For each of the last 5 years, how many Merton schools have set deficit budgets, and how many schools have set deficit budgets for more than 1 year running?

### **Reply**

The number of schools with outturn deficits for the past four years and budget deficits for 2017/18 is as follows:

Description	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Schools with deficits	2	2	2	4	5
Schools with deficits for more than 1 year	2	1	0	1	4

The council works in partnership with schools experiencing deficits to develop and deliver an appropriate recovery plan.

**From: Simon McGrath**

**To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration Environment and Housing**

Housing Supply task group Recommendation 13 says a Council property company should "ensure that it meets Council policy on affordable housing.....that it provides above and beyond the baseline of 40% affordable housing", yet Merton's has proposed only 26% affordable housing. How then can you say this recommendation been achieved?

**Reply**

The Council's affordable housing [Policy CS8] states that the council will;

Aim for the borough-wide affordable housing target of 40% which is equivalent to the numerical target of 1,920 affordable homes in Merton for the period 2011- 2026.

In seeking affordable housing provision we will have regard to site characteristics such as site size, site suitability and economics of provision such as financial viability issues and other planning contributions.

The exact level of affordable housing to be achieved through the Council's Property Company sites will be determined through the planning application process and justified by an independent viability assessment, as required by the Council's planning policies and in line with the Mayor of London's recently published guidance.

**From: Christine Matthews**

**To the Cabinet Member for Street Cleanliness and Parking**

Can the council please explain how the new service for residential street cleaning is organised?

**Reply**

In April 2017 we commissioned a new contractor, Veolia, to undertake the waste collection and street cleaning across the Borough. In line with their bid submission, Veolia have implemented a neighbourhood approach to deliver the street cleaning

operations. Each neighbourhood has an associated team of Veolia operatives and an Environmental Manager overseeing and co-ordinating their work. This approach contributes towards building knowledge and a sense of pride amongst the neighbourhood team. The Environmental Managers become familiar with the requirements of the area and apply their resources accordingly.

The contract requires Veolia to maintain a consistent standard of cleanliness across the whole borough in line with best practice from Defra's Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse. This approach measures the contractor based on their output rather than the amount of resources they use or the frequency at which they clean the streets. In order to achieve the required standard, the contractor is required to apply whatever resources, at whatever frequency, are required to maintain the necessary contractual standards. In practice, this means the contractor will apply more resources to town centres than residential areas even though the contract requires the streets in both areas to be maintained to the same standard. To achieve this consistent standard of cleansing, Veolia use a number of different methods of cleaning the streets and alter the frequency depending on the footfall and littering of the area concerned.

Street operatives conduct manual litter picking and broom sweeping alongside mechanical and electrical sweepers which provide an efficient and effective way to lift litter and detritus from Merton's streets. In order to hold the contractor to account we have created a new Neighbourhood Client Team who undertake site inspections and work closely with the contractor's Area Managers to ensure that service standards are maintained and any rectifications are addressed in line with our contractual agreements. They also undertake visits and walk-about with local ward Members who have concerns about littering in their area in order to address the issues in a proactive manner.

### **Supplementary**

Can the Council give us assurance that they will re-look at the contract with Veolia so that residential street cleaning will be as thorough as it was prior to this contract?

### **Reply**

I'd like to thank Ms Matthews for her question and her supplementary question as well. I can give a commitment that we will be publishing a performance review of Veolia which will be going to Scrutiny Panel which will be open to the public. I'd also like to reassure her that senior officers as well as myself are regularly monitoring the performance of Veolia to ensure that it does meet the conditions of the contract which we have agreed with them and the South London Waste Partnership.

**From: Vincent Bolt,  
To the Cabinet Member for Education**

How much demand is there in Merton for the new 30 hours of free childcare and how many places are available?

### **Reply**

## **TO BE ANSWERED BY THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

In 2016 the DFE estimated that should all the Merton parents of 3 and 4 year olds wish to take up the provision then Merton would require 1630 places. In June 2017 there were 108 providers who confirmed their intention to deliver the 30 hours, providing an estimated 1043 places. However Merton provision is not exclusively used by Merton residents and some of our residents take up provision closer to their work location. Some parents will not wish to take up the offer in full or in part. As a new initiative, we are not expecting a full take up of the 30 hour offer, and we will be working towards this over the next few years.

It will take some time to assess the popularity and take up of the offer and the private, voluntary and maintained sectors will want to adapt to the volumes as they become clearer.

**From: Carl Quilliam**

**To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration Environment and Housing**

When will Merton council have a completed local plan and what provisions will it have to provide land for self-build projects for local people?

### **Reply**

Merton Council has a completed Local Plan as follows.

Merton's Local Plan consists of the following plans:

- Core Planning Strategy (2011)
- South London Waste Plan (2012)
- Sites & Policies Plan (2014)
- Estates Local Plan (2017 emerging)

We will be initiating a review of our Local Plan in December 2017.

We keep a register of people who are interested in self-build or custom build projects in Merton. Between April and 31 October 2016, 194 individuals and two organisations joined the register.

By signing up, you will help us find out more about the demand for custom and self-build plots in Merton, where people would like their plot to be and the type of house that they would like to build.

We will use the information to explore ways in which it might be possible to bring together people or organisations on the register and landowners who have potential sites for sale or rent for self build or custom housebuilding. Registration does not however guarantee that a suitable plot will be identified, or that land will become available.

Register at:

<https://www2.merton.gov.uk/environment/planning/self-build-register.htm>

**From: Dolores O'Donoghue**  
**To the Cabinet Member for Street Cleanliness and Parking**

The welcome introduction of metered parking in Morden Hall Park has moved inconsiderate commuter parking to Morden Hall Road and The Drive. Congestion and tailbacks have created problems during quieter holiday period. Once the schools go back it will get worse. How do the Council intend to address this?

**Reply**

**TO BE ANSWERED BY THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT,  
REGENERATION AND HOUSING**

We are aware of the obstructive parking that has occurred on Morden Road and have now implemented parking restrictions which came into effect last week.

**From: Emma Maddison**  
**To the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health**

Given the high number of new mothers who struggle with breastfeeding and the closure of many drop-in support centres over the last few years, how is the council supporting women in the borough to access breastfeeding support?

**Reply**

Increasing breastfeeding forms part of our Child Healthy Weight Action Plan. Merton's Annual Public Health Report 2016/17 - *Tackling Childhood Obesity Together*, sets out our commitment to reducing childhood obesity and promoting breastfeeding contributes to this.

The focus of our plans include maintaining the evidence-based Unicef 'Baby Friendly Initiative (BFI) Level 3' accreditation for our community health services commissioned by the Council, which few areas have achieved. The Unicef BFI accreditation ensure that our community Health Visiting services are trained to a high level and the service is assessed to ensure mothers are supported with their feeding, given useful and accurate information and that parents are supported to recognise the importance of bonding and relationships and how to build these. Our universal Health Visiting services have 5 mandated contacts with families (Antenatal, 10-14 days after birth, 6-8 weeks, 1 year and 2 years). The service is currently setting up antenatal contacts with pregnant women to support women to develop an earlier relationship with their health visitors. There are also a number of Child Health clinics in the borough, which are open for women to attend and receive additional support where they may have any concerns – details are available at:  
<https://fsd.merton.gov.uk/kb5/merton/directory/family.page?familychannel=5>

A new Infant Feeding Coordinator will also be starting in post in September and a Merton Infant Feeding Steering group has been established which will guide the work to increase and maintain breastfeeding rates in the borough. In Merton at 6-8 week, the latest data shows 74% of women are totally or partially breastfeeding. In

general, Merton has relatively higher breastfeeding rates than other areas in London and England (based on reported data), however, we understand that more can be done. Therefore, through the work of the Infant Feeding Steering Group, actions and progress locally on improving breastfeeding rates and the support to women will be monitored.

**From: Barry Smith**  
**To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration Environment and Housing**

With the increased commercialisation of building control services, how is the council ensuring that building work is actually meeting the building regulations set by the government, as opposed to being signed off on the basis of industry standards and opaque industry tests?

**Reply**

The council's profession Building Control team has a duty to rigorously inspect any of the applications they are dealing with and ensure the Building regulations are complied with. The council do not inspect works undertaken by private Approved Inspectors, as those inspectors are responsible for ensuring Building Regulations are adhered to for their own projects.

**From: Klaartje Dresselaers**  
**To the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance**

Does the council have maternity, paternity & parental leave policies in place that cover all council staff, councillors and cabinet members?

**Reply**

The Council has maternity, paternity and parental leave policies in place covering council staff. Merton Council does not have maternity, paternity and parental leave policies in place for councillors; such provision would be a matter for the political group to which the councillor belonged, but we encourage groups to take a forward-thinking approach when these issues arise to ensure sufficient cover is provided to colleagues who need to take leave due to parental activities, without reducing the level of service provided to our constituents.

**From: Somayeh Aghnianejad**  
**To the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance**

Does the councillors expenses allowance cover childcare costs?

**Reply**

A Dependent Carer's Allowance is available to councillors as set out in Part 6 of the Council's constitution:  
<https://democracy.merton.gov.uk/documents/s12268/ConstitutionPart62016.pdf>  
Councillors may claim this allowance as reimbursement of costs they incur for looking after children (under the age of 16) or dependent relatives whilst carrying out

an approved duty, usually attending evening meetings. Details of all claims paid are included in the report on member allowances and expenses that is published on the council's website.



### **From Cllr David Chung to the Leader of the Council**

Could the Cabinet Member update me on the plans to build a new secondary school in South Wimbledon?

#### **Reply**

The requirement to open Harris Wimbledon for September 2018 is essential as we will have an additional 250 children leaving LB Merton Primary Schools next summer requiring a secondary school place. Harris Wimbledon Academy is advertised to open in September 2018 for two years at Whatley with the new school building at High Path, South Wimbledon to be open in September 2020.

The council is working hard to provide a clear site at High Path so that the ESFA can build the permanent school on time including the progression of a complex land assembly. This involves finalising the relocation of the High Path Day Centre, the purchase of the Domex industrial unit and exchanging one freehold site for an equivalent to support the relocation of Elim Church. Members will be aware that Merton Hall on Kingston Road SW19 is the only viable location following extensive research by external consultants and the EFA. Following concerns raised by the planning committee, officers have worked hard with their design consultants to ensure that a revised scheme can meet the initial concerns of the planning committee and have received a 'green' rating from the independent design review panel regarding the revised design. We also have clear assurance from Elim that the building will remain open for community use lettings when not required by the church

The ESFA are now working with two preferred contractors on the design of the new school at High Path and we expect, subject to the Planning Committee's decision on 21 September, that there will be a community consultation on the permanent new school design in November or December 2017.

#### **Supplementary**

This is for the Leader – Could the Leader outline how the plans for the new school will not only improve the chances for our young people including those at Singlegate and Merton Abbey but will also safeguard existing services and offer new opportunities for the local community?

#### **Reply**

Thank you Councillor Chung for your original question and for your supplementary. Let me begin at the beginning as they say on this one; the need for all our tomorrows that is for our children. Over the last decade there has been an unprecedented rise in children needing primary school places; we are all fully aware of that. To meet demand we have created 4000 primary school places so every child can receive an education where they live. Soon the children who joined reception madam mayor, a decade only will move to a secondary school, so we need to build a new School in South Wimbledon where the need is greatest. The New School will be built on land at High Path which includes Elim Church and High Path Day Centre. We found High Path Day Centre a new home, safeguarding the existing service madam mayor. But

Elim also needs a new home and building a new school must be value for money, so we've agreed to swap Merton Hall. Elim make a huge contribution to the Merton community and Elim host the local food bank helping the neediest families in our community. Since the Foodbank opened in 2011, it has had 157 tonnes of items donated by residents, businesses and churches, Madam Mayor. Over the Christmas period, Elim Church helped over 500 people with support of 70 volunteers. When Elim move into Merton Hall, residents can continue to hire Merton Hall as a community space, again, safeguarding the existing service. When the new Harris School opens, Merton children can continue to enjoy a first class education, where all Merton Secondary Schools are good or outstanding. We on this side Madam Mayor, support Elim Church, support Merton Hall and support a new School in South Wimbledon.

**From Councillor Gilli Lewis-Lavender to the Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Engagement and Equalities**

Please can the Cabinet Member provide details of all unauthorised traveller encampments in Merton over the past 2 years together with the costs incurred in dealing with these by both the council and the police (including officer time as well as property damage and clean up operations)?

**Reply**

Sixteen unauthorised traveller encampments were recorded in Merton since September 2015 but I cannot guarantee knowledge of all unauthorised traveller encampments as some may have taken place on private land and council officers may not have received notification. In addition I have no information on the private landowners' costs or police costs. Council officers do not log their time and in the time available it has not been possible to obtain costs from the MPS for their time and effort in dealing with these nor the cost of clearance. Further detail will be provided if and when available.

- September 2015. Segas Site, Western Road, Mitcham. Private site.
- February 2016. Rear of Pets at Home, Bushey Road, Shannon Corner. Private Site.
- August 2016. Morden Park Playing Fields.
- August 2016. Halfords Car Park, Streatham Road, Mitcham. Private site.
- August 2016. Cricket Green, Mitcham.
- August 2016. Land adjoining Vestry Hall, Mitcham.
- September 2016. Car Park adjoining Hillcross Depot, Hillcross Road, Morden.
- September 2016. Figges Marsh, Streatham Road, Mitcham.
- October 2016. Pitch 9, Brickfield Road Traveller Site, Wimbledon.
- November 2016. Halfords Site, Streatham Road, Mitcham. Private site.
- January 2017. Ruach City Church, Turle Road, Streatham. Private Site.
- February 2017. Rear of former Nurdin and Peacock building, Bushey Road, Shannon Corner. Private site.
- June 2017. Cannon Hill Common, Cannon Hill Lane, Morden.
- July 2017. Rear of White Hart Public House, London Road, Mitcham. Private site.

## 06: Non ST Questions

- August 2017. Cranmer Green, Cranmer Road, Mitcham.
- August 2017. Cannon Hill Common, Cannon Hill Lane, Morden.

### **Supplementary**

I thank the Cabinet Member for her reply. I must say I find the answer very disappointing but I do look forward to receiving further detail because it is quite clear it is a problem, and it should be logged properly. So to my question; during the recent encampment on Cannon Hill Common, one lady, one of my residents, was bitten by a dog and had to go to hospital and the dog belonged to the travellers. Yet so far no charges have been brought. This dithering infuriates residents in West Barnes that the Council comes along and spends thousands of pounds clearing up the mess, yet does nothing to stop the travellers taking up residence in the first place. When is the Council going to introduce proper permanent safeguards to prevent travellers gaining access to our beautiful common? Thank you.

### **Reply**

Thank you Councillor Lewis-Lavender for your supplementary question. As you are very much aware, most Councils in London suffer from the same predicament as you have mentioned in your question. We as an authority in Merton we do our best to do what we can in sorting these problems. It is very difficult we cannot give the figures or costs as I mentioned in the reply which you have in front of you. I am very sorry to hear that someone was bitten by a dog, as you know it is very difficult as well to prosecute somebody for a dog bite case, obviously you must prove that the dog is dangerous that the dog has bitten someone before; it is something which I have dealt with before as part of my job and I know how difficult dog bite cases are to deal with. So please bear with us, if and when we get the figures we will pass it on.

### **From Cllr Dennis Pearce to the Cabinet Member for Education**

Could the cabinet member outline how we work with our schools to improve performance?

### **Reply**

The Council has a School Improvement Strategy which it has agreed with schools. The strategy sets out the Local Authority's (LA's) principles, aims, priorities and mechanisms to ensure that all Merton schools are supported and challenged to continue to improve and to provide the best possible education for the children and young people in their care.

The Council has a range of services working within the strategy, led by the School Improvement team, providing the support and challenge required to secure the best outcomes. The School Improvement team comprises inspectors and advisors who both work in schools and provide universal, central support, (mostly through continuing professional development opportunities). Other officers from a variety of teams provide support for behaviour, IT, Looked After Children, safeguarding, governors, attendance, exclusions, traveller pupils, admissions and data analysis.

## 06: Non ST Questions

All schools are linked to an inspector, and receive at least two visits a year. During these visits, inspectors seek to work as closely as possible with school leaders in the individual context of each school, focusing on the areas covered by the Ofsted framework, including safeguarding. Advisory support is also available for all schools from the MSI team.

Where schools are evaluating themselves to be less than good, or where the Local Authority has concerns about performance, support from the inspector increases. Advisors also provide targeted support for these schools.

Schools where significant concerns are identified also work with the LA through the mechanism of Support and Challenge Groups. These groups, chaired by the Head of School Improvement, challenge and hold the school to account for improvements required in line with the school's action plan/development plan, and ensure that support for the school is effectively co-ordinated, and broker additional support where needed.

### **Supplementary**

Thank you for the answer. Would the Cabinet Member agree with me about the continued rise in standards from our young people in the GCSE and A Level Results over the years and congratulate them on all the hard work they have put in?

### **Reply**

I'd like to thank Councillor Pearce for his question and I'm sure everyone across the Chamber will join in congratulating all of our young people in their outstanding GCSE and A Level results. I am sure that many of us are aware but lets remind us, that this has been a year of change and actually exams have got tougher and young people who are sitting their GCSEs, those of us who maybe employ young people, you may get a CV this year that has a mixture of numbers and letters so there has been quite a lot of change that our young people and our schools have had to take on board. Despite all of that change, 72% of our young people achieved grades 4-9 which was equivalent of the A\* to C grades in English and Maths which is well above our 2016 national average and 2% up compared on last year, so I think despite all of those changes we should congratulate those who sat their GCSEs. In terms of A Levels we achieved the proportion of A\*-E grades were at 99% which is above the national average of 98% and again that's against a backdrop of some challenging and changing exams. As we have already heard tonight we are a Borough that has Children's Services that are dynamic ambitious and successful and that goes for our Schools as well. Every single one of our Secondary Schools has been judged outstanding by OFSTED. So I think we should be proud, we should put on record tonight and I hope everyone will join me to thank the headteachers, the teachers, the teaching staff, the team here, Yvette and Jane and most importantly our young people, who despite the changes that we throw at them are turning up, working hard and pumping out results. So I thank the Councillor for his question and yes, definitely recognise the excellent work of all of our young people.

**From Councillor Janice Howard to the Cabinet Member for Community and Culture**

## 06: Non ST Questions

Can the Cabinet Member update me on the popularity of the borough's paddling pools with residents this summer?

### **Reply**

The attraction of these facilities is generally very weather-dependent and the general impression of officers in Greenspaces is that overall numbers were down on 2016 due to the fact that the weather was not especially favourable during the core weeks of the summer this year. On those days when the sun shone and the ambient temperatures were in the 20-30 degrees range then attendances, most especially at the more popular venues at Wimbledon Park, Sir Joseph Hood Memorial Playing Fields and at Tamworth Recreation Ground, were good and typically measured in the hundreds per day. Obviously on days of inclement weather the sites are less popular and can be entirely empty

### **Supplementary**

I thank the Cabinet Member for his response but I was concerned to learn of the delays to the opening of the paddling pools this Summer due to maintenance issues by the Council's new contractor idverde. Can the Cabinet Member tell me the size of the fine which I understand the Council has issued to idverde as a result of their failure to maintain Merton's playgrounds and paddling pools to an acceptable standard?

### **Reply**

Thank you very much indeed for your question. I can't tell you that straight away I will give you that information in the near future. I will say however that on the first day that the paddling pools were supposed to be open myself and Councillor Mary Curtin sent exactly that same question saying why on earth is this not open on time. Idverde have had teething troubles, they dealt with those teething troubles as quickly as they possibly could, as soon as they realised they had created a problem and our paddling pools were up and running within 3 days of when they should have been. As far as the fine goes, I am very very glad that you have pointed out there is a fine on the way; I will come back to you with an exact sum as soon as I possibly can.

### **From John Sargeant to the Cabinet Member for Community and Culture**

The Eastern Electrics event which was held in Morden Park on 5 August was hailed as a success by local news organisations. We would support the council seeking opportunities to raise the profile of Morden and to raise funds from appropriate outdoor events where the financial risk is borne by external organisations.

While we welcome the fact that council officers are preparing a report to learn lessons from the event, can the Cabinet Member tell us how many people attended, whether any arrests were made in the vicinity of the event and how many complaints were received from members of the public?

### **Reply**

Teams across the Council worked hard to ensure the Eastern Electrics event at Morden Park was safe and secure. They worked closely with the police and the event organisers to carefully manage noise pollution, food hygiene, litter and anti-social behaviour associated with large crowds. The event was subject to close scrutiny by the Licensing Committee and restrictions were put on the event to limit its numbers to 17,000 and reduce the times at which loud music could be played. Our enforcement officers ensured these limits were adhered to and we appreciate the efforts of the event organisers to follow these restrictions as well as manage the behaviour of the crowds. Overall the event was a success and proved popular. However, in line with best practice, our officers are of course reviewing the event and identifying lessons to be learned to ensure the safety and success of any future events.

The official attendance figure for the event was 15,995, of which no arrests were made.

The number of complaints received by the Council subsequent to the event was 16.

### **Supplementary**

I thank the Cabinet Member for his reply. We were pleased that there were so few complaints received associated with this new innovative event, indeed with its joyous toe-tapping music. We welcome too the better more robust financial approach that we are taking for events such as this, but I wonder will the member be reviewing the £50,000 which we stand to gain from the event in view of the fact that there are quite a few costs which the Council incurred associated with it and in fact, will he be checking that £50,000 is the right sort of level bearing in mind other events around London of a similar nature?

### **Reply**

Thank you very much for your secondary question. I'd also before I start I'd like to thank the Licensing Committee for, after a long debate, I know it was a very difficult debate, allowing this event to go ahead in the first place. I am very very grateful to you all for that because as it turned out, the event, which I'm the first to admit I had real concerns about, it's the first time that we'd ever done something of this nature in Merton, did prove to be a success, quite a large success as far as I'm concerned 16 complaints are 16 complaints wherever they come from, we do take them seriously. We have learnt, different things will happen next year. There was a certain amount of monitoring that took place of course those are our overhead costs, but 50,000 quid is 50,000 quid. Yes, we are going to look at it again, yes, I would expect in the future to get more, not only from this event but other events as well. I am aware of what is charged elsewhere in London for not totally similar events but nevertheless and I very much hope, however difficult this may be, that we get a decent amount of income from events such as this, hopefully some quieter ones as well, within our Parks too, because it is, Parks are there for all our population to use, and for people from elsewhere to use and we should be making money from them and we should be putting that money back into our Parks and back into our Community.

**From Cllr Pauline Cowper to the Leader of the Council**

## 06: Non ST Questions

Could the Leader comment on whether he has met with the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime regarding their Public Access and Engagement consultation.

### **Reply**

I can confirm to Cllr Cowper that I did indeed meet with MOPAC and the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime, Sophie Linden in June regarding their current consultation. The Deputy Mayor outlined to me the severe pressures the Met is under with a significant cut in their government funding. They are in a similar position to the council with huge loses in funding meaning difficult decision need to be considered in order to protect front line services, which for the police means protecting frontline police officer numbers. However I am very clear that in Merton we need both our police stations, in Wimbledon and in Mitcham, and I strongly believe that London deserves sufficient government funding to protect police stations as well as "bobbies on the beat."

### **Supplementary**

I'm glad to hear that the Leader has met with MOPAC regarding their consultation on the Police stations in the Borough. Will the Leader take up funding of the Met Police with the Home Secretary and Minister for London so that both our police stations can remain open?

### **Reply**

I thank Councillor Cowper for her original question and for her supplementary. I will commit to writing to both the Home Secretary Amber Rudd and to the Minister for London Greg Hands. I will write to them taking up funding issues so that both of our Police stations can remain open. Madam Mayor I will also refer them to the Deputy Commissioner of the Met Police, Craig Mackey. Mr Mackey has again raised concerns about the future of the Mets crime-fighting ability in the face of plans by this Tory Government to cut £400 million from the service over the next 4 years. In August, Mackey told the Evening Standard that as demand grows, you have to have a way of controlling and triaging, he is of course referring to the likelihood Madam Mayor that vulnerable victims will need to be prioritised over other victims of crime in London. What a state of affairs of policing in London under this Tory Government. I would also refer them to the latest Home Office statistics that the number of Met police officers is slowing down year-on-year. In September 2015 there were 32,183 serving officers, by March 2017 Madam Mayor, this figure had fallen to 31,517 officers. Again, what a state of affairs for policing in London. On this side of the Chamber Madam Mayor, we will not pick and choose; we support both of our police stations. Thank you Madam Mayor.

### **From Councillor James Holmes to the Cabinet Member for Education:**

Can the Cabinet Member update me on the expansion of secondary schools in Merton including funds deployed to date and the planned construction at school sites?

### **Reply**

The administration's strategy for school expansion is to expand schools in the east as needed to meet demand, and to facilitate the Harris Wimbledon Academy in the South Wimbledon area. I have updated Cllr Chung with regard to the detail on the new school but the expenditure to 31 August 2017 is £6.71 million, largely on the purchase of the Domex site at High Path in the last financial year. Local parents are very supportive of the new school which will offer their children more opportunities to attend a good quality state funded local secondary school at a time of increased demand. As part of the land assembly for the new schools we are also moving the High Path Day Centre to an improved site, with service users and carers involved in the plans for what the new centre will offer. The Elim church is planning to move to Merton Hall as part of the scheme and I am pleased this excellent local faith group will be continuing their work in the local community, (subject to planning consent) including running the Wimbledon Food Bank from the new site.

The other mainstream secondary school expansion currently in process is the expansion of Harris Academy Merton. The capital project is almost completed and the scheme expenditure up to 31 August 2017 is £2.23 million.

There have been substantial improvements at the Harris schools since they were introduced, with GCSE grades increased significantly since 2006 and the new Harris Primary recently rated Outstanding by Ofsted. I would like to thank Lord Harris and his team led by Dan Moynihan for their efforts in the borough.

### **Supplementary**

I thank the Cabinet Member for her answer. My question relates to the GLA revised figures suggesting how many pupils might now be progressing to Secondary Schools and the expectation that it is less than had been originally planned. My question is what implications do you see in those figures, how has that affected your planning, and if it does mean that more money is available than anticipated, in other words not all of it is needed at secondary schools, what would be your priorities as to where that might be spent instead?

### **Reply**

I thank Councillor Holmes for his supplementary question. In terms of numbers I think the thing about this Council and the officers we have, is that we are always planning, we are always making sure we are looking at the data and planning ahead so we are ahead of the game. So we are prepared for whatever comes and will be prepared to make sure that our children are attending the best Schools that we can provide for them, so therefore when it comes to any extra money, I don't know where the extra money will come from in fact because I think the government is still struggling to fund schools properly, so I can't imagine there being any extra funding, but if there is, we will definitely find a way to use it properly.

### **From Cllr Brenda Fraser to the Cabinet Member for Children's Services**

Could the Cabinet Member comment on how we have focused on improving outcomes in adoption and fostering?



## Reply

In 2012 Ofsted found our work in adoption and fostering to both be “Good”. Fostering is now no longer inspected separately but I am delighted that Children’s Services received an overall “Good” judgement again this year and that our Adoption Services were found to be “outstanding”. Continuous improvement is our stated ambition for all our children’s services and I’m delighted that Ofsted concluded: “Exceptional leadership and governance and strong frontline management ensure that children’s services are consistently good. All children receive a good service and some receive an outstanding service. Inspectors saw that significant and sustained improvements have been achieved since the last inspection in 2012.” The Director and her team have maintained this continuous improvement through a robust approach to quality assurance and regular self-evaluation with service improvement plans for key services to ensure that we continue to press for further improvements to deliver our ambitions for our children and for their improved outcomes. With regard to fostering and adoption specifically we have continued to recruit and retain excellent foster carers and to ensure we have robust and timely plans to achieve permanence for our children. Year on year we have improved our performance on a range of adoption performance indicators and I am particularly proud that the report noted...” Adoption performance is outstanding, with all children requiring adoption currently being placed and no children waiting.”

## Supplementary

I’d like to congratulate the Cabinet Member on the recent OFSTED inspection result which rated Merton as Good with Outstanding features and can she outline how this compares with other Boroughs?

## Reply

I thank Councillor Fraser for her question. We’ve heard tonight where we got - it’s been a great result. In terms of where that lands us as an authority - only 3 local authorities in the whole of the country in fact have been awarded Outstanding overall and only a small number have been judged Good with Outstanding features which puts us in the top 3 Local Authorities in London and the top 10 in the Country, so again I’d like to put on record my thanks to the staff to Yvette and the team for all of their hard work but also to our parents, carers and young people that take part in those figures. That’s quite a good result. Thanks.

## **From Councillor Michael Bull to the Cabinet Member for Street Cleanliness and Parking**

Over the summer, has the Council been undertaking any activity to ensure that residents take appropriate protective action during periods of hot weather and that those who are vulnerable to heat are protected?

**TO BE ANSWERED BY THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND HEALTH**

## **Reply**

In the event of particularly hot or cold temperatures we write to our care providers advising them to take appropriate action to protect those that they care for. In the case of hot weather, this includes ensuring that the care for person is in a comfortable environment and has ready access to water. If they have concerns about someone, carers alert health as appropriate.

## **Supplementary**

I thank the Cabinet Member for his response. Following the walk out of staff from JD Sports in Colliers Wood due to conditions during the June heatwave which were described by them as “unbearably warm”, what action has the Council been taking to ensure that workers within the Borough are not subjected to oppressive conditions during periods of extremely hot weather?

## **Reply**

I thank him for his question and for his supplementary. It’s not something that I am able to answer this evening, but I am very happy to write to him after tonight with any action that we have taken.

## **From Cllr Sally Kenny to the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health**

With “bridging the gap” a core strategic aim of the council, what measurements are used to determine progress with bridging the gap in public health services in Merton

## **Reply**

The Public Health Outcomes Framework (PHOF) is the overarching set of indicators which public health uses to help us to understand how well public health is being improved and protected in the borough. Where possible, we look at this data at sub-borough level, to tell us how we are doing on closing the gap between the most deprived and the least deprived areas in Merton, for instance looking at differences in life expectancy between east and west over time.

Closing the gap in health inequalities in Merton is the overarching aim of the Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2015-2018, and includes a number of metrics that monitor the differences between east and west Merton, for instance:

- Gap between the percentage of 10-11 year olds who are obese between east and west
- Gap in alcohol-related harm between east and west

The Public Health team commissions a number of services covering children and young people (e.g. Health Visiting and School Nursing) through to adults and older people (e.g. Substance Misuse services, Befriending services). Commissioning is based on an assessment of need (through the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) process), including looking at where the inequalities are in access to services and in health outcomes, and provider performance is then monitored through metrics

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such as service activity and health outcomes, broken down by factors such as age, sex and where service users live, to assess whether services are meeting need.

However, it must be recognised that the public health budget is relatively small compared to council spending and that of other partners such as the NHS, and the evidence tells us that the influence of the 'broader determinants of health' (such as where people live, their socioeconomic status, their access to education, employment and training, etc) are more important than health services in ensuring a healthy population. Therefore delivery of public health services on their own will not close the gap; more influential is a 'Health in All Policies' approach, so the Public Health team are also working cross-council and with partners to ensure that the impact of broader public sector spend is health-promoting and appropriately targeted to need.

The Director of Public Health has a statutory duty to produce an independent Annual Public Health Report (APHR). Tackling health inequalities is selected as the focus for the 2017/18 report – it will analyse the trends in health inequalities in Merton (between the 30% most and 30% least deprived wards in Merton), and look at the potential closing the gap through focusing specifically on the broader determinants of health. This year's APHR will provide the baseline for the refresh of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, informing priority setting to achieve increasing impact at scale. The APHR will be published towards the end of the financial year 2017/18.

### **Supplementary**

I'd like to thank the Cabinet Member for his reply, and ask him how the closure of the Wilson Hospital and the secret plans to close the A&E at St Helier help the Council to achieve our stated aim of bridging the gap?

### **Answer**

I'd like to thank her for her question and for her supplementary. The Council has had a long-standing ambition to bridge the gap between the East and West. We know that more people have a bad or very bad health condition living within a mile of St Helier than at Belmont and Epsom. We know that there were more adult A&E admissions at St Helier last year than there were at Epsom. We know that there were more paediatric A&E admissions at St Helier last year than there were at Epsom. We know that the percentage of neighbourhoods within a mile radius considered to be some of the most deprived and significantly higher than at Belmont or Epsom. Madam Mayor closing the walk-in centre and any potential downgrading or closure at St Helier would do nothing but widen the gap between the East and West which is why we have fought and will continue to fight against any such plans.

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### From Cllr Mary Curtin to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Environment and Housing

Will the cabinet member give the current numbers in temporary accommodation and how it compares to other London boroughs?

#### Reply

As at the end of July 2017, Merton had 180 households living in temporary accommodation. This is the lowest in London, save the City of London, and reflects the Councils work on homelessness prevention. Below is a summary of performance for all London Boroughs for those in temporary accommodation published by the DCLG at the end of Q1 2017 which shows 54,283 in London; the figures in our neighbouring boroughs are as follows: Lambeth 1,992, Wandsworth 1,490, Sutton 534, Kingston 671, Richmond 259 and Croydon 2,449. These numbers change regularly as new households enter temporary accommodation and others are either rehoused or leave temporary accommodation.

<b>London borough</b>	<b>All temporary housing types</b>
Barking and Dagenham	1,844
Barnet	2,757
Bexley	1,017
Brent	2,915
Bromley	1,439
Camden	390
City of London	18
Croydon	2,449
Ealing	2,233
Enfield	3,244
Greenwich	520
Hackney	2,900
Hammersmith and Fulham	1,264
Haringey	3,147
Harrow	758

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Havering	738
Hillingdon	660
Hounslow	853
Islington	806
Kensington and Chelsea	1,849
Kingston upon Thames	671
Lambeth	1,992
Lewisham	1,864
Merton	186
Newham	4,457
Redbridge	2,308
Richmond upon Thames	259
Southwark	1,805
Sutton	534
Tower Hamlets	2,114
Waltham Forest	2,299
Wandsworth	1,490
Westminster	2,503
Total	54,283

Data source:

<http://opendatacommunities.org/slice?dataset=http%3A%2F%2Fopendatacommunities.org%2Fdata%2Fhomelessness%2Fhouseholds-accommodated%2Ftemporary-housing-types&http%3A%2F%2Fopendatacommunities.org%2Fdef%2Fontology%2Ftime%2FrefPeriod=http%3A%2F%2Freference.data.gov.uk%2Fid%2Fquarter%2F2017-Q1>

**Supplementary**

I would like to thank the Cabinet Member for his reply. Merton has clearly done great work to reduce numbers in temporary accommodation, but how does he see the impact of George Osborne's £7 billion of future welfare cuts impacting on Merton

families and would he join me in congratulating the Wimbledon Food Bank and other local organisations in the work they do to mitigate the impact of this nasty Tory Government?

### **Reply**

I'd like to thank Councillor Curtin for her supplementary question, and she's right about the damaging impact of Osborne's benefit cuts. We see this with the bedroom tax, one of the most pernicious taxes this government has introduced since coming into power. We see it as well in terms of the housing crisis. The issues in relation to welfare have led to more and more issues in relation to housing benefit. Housing benefit bills have risen as increasing costs. People are struggling day by day that's why they are relying more and more in terms of foodbanks. The Elim Church in South Wimbledon have done an absolutely fantastic job but it does show the absolute failure of the Conservative government who have been in power for 7 years. We've had 7 years of a stagnating economy, it's helped the people at the top, but has it helped the people at the bottom. It is, you might laugh, if you look at the statistics, I certainly Councillor Badenoch don't find them very funny. I think that shows to you Madam Mayor the attitude the conservatives have towards the poorest members of our society.

### **From Councillor David Simpson to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Environment and Housing**

Would the Cabinet Member please inform me how many times each of the new electric charging points around the borough have been used since they came on stream and the total revenue thus far raised?

### **Reply**

The Council currently does not have up to date information of the number of times electric vehicles charges points have been used since they were commissioned, but will request this information from Source London (bluepoint) for circulation to members. All the charge points are privately owned and provided at zero cost to the council.

### **Supplementary**

Thank you for your answer. I just wonder whether he'd like to tell us throw some light on when the next electric only parking bays which I gather are under development are going to be put in place and where this is happening, there is no information that is being provided thus far as I can tell by the ward councillors or residents.

### **Reply**

I'd like to thank Councillor Simpson for his supplementary. As he is well aware a number have been rolled out throughout the Borough over the past few months, they have proven to be extremely popular; I think we welcome that considerably. Car clubs are important, but also as well in terms of electric car and zero emissions. We of course are looking for additional charging points, they are a growth area, if we

have any ones that we are looking at installing we will of course consult with the Councillors in their ward. I hope to see more and more of them across Merton as a whole, they are a good thing, but clearly they do take development in terms of time and to actually build up more people using them. So far, but there is a long long way to go and we have to as well recognise the huge air quality issues that we have in this city in terms of polluting vehicles.

**From Cllr Kelly Braund to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Environment and Housing**

What is the likely financial impact on the council following the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act?

**Reply**

The Council supports the Homeless Reduction Act approach to tackling homelessness which focuses on prevention and early intervention. The Council, alongside other London Boroughs, is working with London Councils to ensure that it receives the correct level of funding so as to provide the best possible way of meeting our residents needs and has undertaken a survey on the potential financial impact which includes data on current caseload, prevention activity and potential changes on how we give advice following the implementation of the HRA.

**Supplementary**

Can I thank the Cabinet Member for his response about the financial impact on the Council of the Homeless Reduction Act. May I ask; is there an additional level of funding to cover the substantial costs of the introduction of the Homeless Reduction Act which puts new duties on local authorities but does not appear to allocate any funding for it?

**Reply**

We have not as of yet been informed about how much additional funding we will receive; clearly the cost will run into millions for this authority. I think the principles of the Act are very good- homelessness prevention, we do a great job we've got a fantastic housing needs team under Steve Langley, but this does need to be properly funded. In an era where we have increasingly budgets which are being reduced, we do need to have any new requirements placed on us fully funded because these are important new requirements which are being placed upon us as an Authority and we do need to have the additional resources given to us to ensure that we undertake these extremely important duties and responsibilities.

**From Councillor Daniel Holden to the Cabinet Member for Street Cleanliness and Parking**

Can the Cabinet Member provide figures for the number of missed a) residential and b) commercial waste collections for each complete month since the new contract with Veolia came into place on 1<sup>st</sup> April and how that compares to the number of



missed residential and commercial waste collections in the months immediately prior to the handover to Veolia?

### **Reply**

It is very important to me and my officers to provide residents with a high quality recycling and waste collection service that is reliable and provides them with the opportunity to recycle as much waste as possible. Unfortunately sometimes things do go wrong and the Council takes every report of a missed bin seriously. Our teams work alongside our waste collection contractor to investigate waste collection issues in order to resolve them quickly for our residents. Officers work hard to keep the number of missed bins as low as possible.

The way in which missed bins are recorded differs depending on: the method used to define a missed bin; the ease at which a resident can report a missed bin; and the technology used by the collection crews to record a missed bin. Since the new collection contract and improvements to our website, we have changed the way we define a missed bin; made it easier for residents to report missed bin collections on-line; and greatly enhanced the recording systems through the use of in-cab, real-time technology. All of these innovations help our crews to miss fewer bins, identify when a bin has been missed, and react more quickly to reports of missed bins. However, as a result of these changes, the data we hold in relation to missed bins is not directly comparable with data prior to the start of the new contract.

Owing to these changes, we are still verifying the numbers of missed bins recorded in each month. The data needs to be cleansed to remove reports which do not reflect a failure on behalf of the contractor and therefore were not accurate reports of a missed collection. When this process is complete, we expect to be able to release the missed bin figures since the contract began.

The commercial waste service operates in a different manner and missed bins are not recorded by the Council. This service is delivered by Veolia directly to their customers and as such, reports of missed bins do not come to the Council.

### **Supplementary**

Thank you to the Cabinet Member for his response. How long does the Cabinet Member believe it is reasonable for residents to wait for a scheduled bulky waste collection for it to be picked up? We have had cases in Hillside and across other Wimbledon wards where residents have arranged for a collection and then it has been left there for up to three or four weeks. They have also tried contacting the Council and have given up and we've had to get involved. Does he believe this period of waiting is acceptable and if not what is he going to do about it?

### **Reply**

I'd like to thank Councillor Holden for his supplementary question. All service standards contained in the contract that we signed through the South London Waste Partnership with Veolia which as a member of the Scrutiny Panel you would have been privy to, so you would have been able to see what we find as acceptable within

that document there. When Veolia do not deliver on their contract, we will enforce that, there are fines built into the contract. If there is a consistent impact on the service we will pursue them.

**Cllr Joan Henry to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Environment and Housing**

How is the cabinet member planning to bridge the gap in terms of providing additional affordable housing in Merton?

**Reply**

Affordable homes are being built across Merton including more than 100 soon-to-be-completed affordable new houses and flats across two sites in Colliers Wood (Christchurch Road and Western Road); 20 new affordable homes across two sites in Burlington Road more than 30 affordable homes across Mitcham including at Preshaw Crescent and Commonsides East. As part of Clarion Housing Group's estate regeneration, the council will be able to access more than 60 homes which will help to further reduce the number of families in temporary accommodation. Officers continue, through their negotiations with developers and investors, to maximise the amount of affordable housing delivered in each scheme.

**Supplementary**

I would like to thank the Cabinet Member for his response. What impact will the Mayor's new Housing Strategy have on affordable housing in Merton?

**Reply**

I'd like to thank Councillor Henry for her supplementary question. What I will say in relation to affordable housing in Merton this has been moved forward since Sadiq Khan took office last year, after 8 wasted years under Boris Johnson. This was a Mayor that under his watch out of new homes approved in London in his final year as Mayor, just 13% were affordable, shows the huge crisis that did exist. We have seen here in Morden the Mayor's commitment to the Housing Zone, we've also seen when the Mayor visited his commitment to provide the level of affordable housing that is needed. We face a huge housing crisis in the City and the Mayor sees this as one of his top priorities. For far too long these issues have been getting worse, the days of inaction are over we have a mayor now that is determined to provide that level of affordable housing but also to provide the new homes that London so desperately needs. So I welcome the Mayor's housing strategy and I look forward to working with him during his time as Mayor. We think it's good for this Borough and we think it's good for the growth of this Borough and long may it continue, but let us be under no illusions, we do face a huge housing crisis in this City and I believe it should be the top priority for all of us collectively to ensure that we get building in London but we also start to address the housing crisis which has got progressively worse and worse in the past 8 years. Thank you.

**From Councillor Stephen Crowe to the Cabinet Member for Street Cleanliness and Parking**

How many people came to help with the latest round of litter picks in Merton?

### **Reply**

We are grateful to the many residents who help to keep our borough clean either by using our bins, taking their litter home with them or by litter picking their local area.

Our biggest litter picking event is the annual Big Clean in March. This year, 205 took part in the weekend clean up across the Borough. We are also very proud and grateful to the 60 regular volunteers who are out during the week litter picking; I am sure there are many more who go out unbeknown to us and I am grateful for their efforts too.

During the summer, we have also had approximately 60 children taking part in litter picks through the Junior Citizen scheme and 20 kids from Pollards Hill Youth Centre took part in a litter pick in August.

We continue to encourage and support community litter picks. We can provide advice on carrying out the exercise safely as well as providing litter pickers, hi-viz jackets and collecting the waste after the event if we are informed where it is. If groups are interested in organising a litter pick, please email [environmental.development@merton.gov.uk](mailto:environmental.development@merton.gov.uk) or call 0208 545 3173

### **Supplementary**

I would like to thank the Cabinet Member for answering my initial question. Involving residents in litter picking clearly has its place and we would encourage more residents to get involved; however, does the cabinet member agree that there is now a widely held view that this Council does not see itself as having a duty to prioritise the delivery of clean streets as a basic service?

### **Reply**

Thank you Councillor Crowe for your supplementary question. I'd like to thank him and his colleagues and colleagues on both sides of the chamber for the Big Tidy Up where we had record numbers of residents, community groups and businesses come together to help litter pick our parks, our streets and our Town Centres, but I don't agree with the premise of his question. We take our duties very seriously in this authority and we will continue to do so whether the service is provided in-house or by a contractor. I think that commitment is demonstrated by the introduction of the Neighbourhood Officers who are monitoring their patches up and down this Borough to see where the streets are falling below the standard and holding the contractor to account and ensuring that those streets are clean and the Service Level Agreements are adhered to.

**From Cllr Philip Jones to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Environment and Housing**

Can the cabinet member update council on the regeneration of High Path, Ravensbury and Eastfields estates?

**Reply**

In July 2017 the independent planning inspector chaired public hearings to examine the council's Estates Local Plan for the regeneration of Eastfields, High Path and Ravensbury. The inspector will now decide on any amendments he would like to make to the council's Estates Local Plan and consult with residents on these. Meanwhile Merton's Planning Applications Committee have resolved to approve Clarion Housing Group's plans for Phase 1 developments in High Path and Ravensbury. Clarion Housing Group intend to submit more detailed applications for each estate during 2018.

**Supplementary**

I'm going to express my thanks to the Cabinet Member for the answer that I've received and ask him to outline the work that has begun with local residents to ensure that their needs are kept at the heart of the regeneration.

**Reply**

Thank you Councillor Jones for his supplementary and I'd also like to welcome him back to the Chamber. I think residents have to be at the heart and obviously we've had the pledges but it's also as well working closely with residents to ensure that they are fully engaged, consulted upon the plans and that their views are listened to. There has been a residents offer to the residents in terms of the housing estate, High Path, Eastfields and his own ward Ravensbury; its important that there is a like for like replacement that is built into the agreement, but also the look and feel of the area - the streets the buildings the outside space but also as well in terms of the design and the amenities which are needed to support the new housing and improving these areas. Over the next 6 months it will be a very busy time, we are likely we will see the estates plan coming forward to this Council shortly and then we will move on to the Planning applications from Clarion. These will be major applications for this Council and it is important that residents are engaged along the way that we do talk to residents that we do work with Clarion in terms of that engagement and obviously that residents are really assured. I think these are exciting times we are living in but we need to as well ensure that it is not just us, that the residents are paramount in terms of any regeneration schemes going forward and that we work closely with them.

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

Can the Cabinet Member tell me how many new wheeled bins the Council estimates it will need in order to introduce its new waste collection arrangements across the borough as from October 2018 and will he provide the relevant workings?

**Reply**

Under the current proposal for changes in waste collection, households will continue to receive weekly collections, with two collections (food and recycling) one week and three collections (food, recycling and general waste) on alternate weeks. Each household will be provided with one wheelie bin for non-recyclable household waste along with a wheelie bin for paper and card; they will continue to use their existing recycling box for plastics, glass and cans.

Based on 2 wheelie bins per property we estimate that this will equate to c127,384 wheelie bins. The numbers are based on ONS Address Base Premium data set Epoch which indicates 63,692 kerbside properties in Merton. However, there will be a small proportion of properties which are not suitable for wheeled bins. We have not yet conducted the exercise to identify these properties and therefore do not know the final number of bins required. This is a piece of work that will be carried out by the joint Project Team consisting of LB of Merton and Veolia staff.

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

For properties, such as terraced housing where there are no front gardens in which to present the wheelie bin the Blue and Purple recycling sack collection will be retained with the revised frequency of collection.

Maisonettes will need to be reviewed on a case by case basis as many maisonettes have side access and front gardens suitable to store the wheelie bins. Where this is not the case then different arrangements will need to be agreed.

### **Supplementary**

I'd like to thank the Cabinet Member for his answer, but I understand that Veolia may be looking to reduce the number of staff manning the refuse vehicles that operate in Merton. Does the Cabinet Member from the Labour administration regret that as a result of the contract they've signed with Veolia that a number of former Merton employees are now going to lose their jobs, many who are Merton residents?

### **Reply**

Thank you Councillor Grocott for your supplementary question. I am always disappointed when people lose their jobs, whether they are part of this Council or whether they work in other industries as well, but as an administration that is business-like we have to balance the needs of our residents against the demands that they face and I thought that the approach that we will be working with Veolia is to keep the dialogue open and to discuss all avenues and opportunities and I will happily speak with her after the meeting about our approach and what we are going to do going forward.

**From Cllr Agatha Akyigyina to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Environment and Housing**

Would the cabinet member update council on the ongoing work in Mitcham and the introduction of the new bus lane?

**Reply**

The Rediscover Mitcham project is nearing the closing stages of the construction works. We appreciate the patience and understanding of our local business and residents as the works have progressed.

Works completed so far include the restoration of Three Kings Pond, Restoration of Mitcham's iconic clock tower, creation of the new Clock Tower Gardens and Market Square, re-paving of Majestic Way, London Road and the streets surrounding the Fair Green. We have also supported business with advice, new shopfronts and our business rate discount scheme.

The new bus street is now fully operational with reports of good journey times through Mitcham town centre. This will be further improved when the new traffic signals at Western Road are commissioned in November 2017 allowing all the surrounding signalised junctions to be linked. We have completed half of the works on Holborn Way, creating segregated cycle lanes and reducing the dominance of the road.

The last part of construction, Phase 5, at the signalised junction with Western Road and Holborn Way / Raleigh Gardens and works are well currently underway. It is expected to be completed by mid-December 2017. Minor touches and tidying up will continue until full completion in Jan 2018.

**Supplementary**

I'd like to thank the Cabinet Member for his response. Can I congratulate the Cabinet Member on the work done in Mitcham and can I ask when the lights on the trees will be switched on because the residents want to know.

**Reply**

I'd like to thank Councillor Akyigyina for her supplementary but also as well in terms of her work as a Mitcham Councillor as we go through the various phases of the work in Mitcham Town Centre. In terms of the lights they have had a huge impact in Mitcham since they were switched on last year. Temporarily they had to be switched off during the regeneration works but she will be delighted to know that they will be going on again shortly; we hope to have them on by the end of October. I think anyone who has been to Mitcham and seen the lights you will know the huge visual impact they have had in terms of lighting up the Town Centre. I'd also like to say as well is that we hope to have all the works completed in Mitcham by the early part of next year; it's looking a lot better, the bus lane is bringing people right into the heart of the Town Centre as well and I know the feedback from local residents has been

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positive, so I know there has been a lot of pain whilst the works have been going on but I believe there will be considerable gain on its completion and the look and feel of the Town Centre will be a credit to the Borough and I do welcome the work that has been undertaken in our Town Centre.

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