

MORDEN COMMUNITY FORUM

16 OCTOBER 2019

(7.15 pm - 9.00 pm)

PRESENT Councillors (in the Chair),

1 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS (Agenda Item 1)

The meeting was held in the Council Chamber at the Civic Centre and chaired by Councillor Nick Draper as Councillor Pauline Cowper was unwell. Over 30 residents attended, as well as seven other Councillors, and officers of the council. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2 OPEN FORUM (Agenda Item 2)

A resident asked if there was an update on building progress at the Mosque, as they are currently taking up a lane on London road. Cllr Draper said that the works would take some time and the Mosque had agreement for the use of the road with Transport for London up to April 2020

A resident asked about the Public Space Protection Order for dog controls. Cllr Draper said the 2017 consultation clearly favoured control orders, but we will follow up with officers to find out the latest information.

UPDATE following the meeting: Officers are exploring how the PSPOs will be enforced, as this is part of a wider plan for enforcement activity. Once this plan is in place the PSPOs will be taken forward.

A resident asked about missed bin collection from communal bins on estates the previous Wednesday and said they would like information if there is a problem with collections by social media.

Cllr Draper said we would follow up the Neighbourhood Client Team to see what the issue was.

UPDATE following the meeting: Officers were not aware of any issues with collections on the day referred to so will check with Veolia

A resident referred to a video on social media showing rats back of shops on London Road in Morden. Cllr Draper said this would be raised with officers.

A resident asked if pavement parking on Central Road next to Morden Recreation Ground, was allowed and cars are blocking the pavement. Cllr Draper said that specific issues could be raised with the Highways team by emailing

trafficandhighways@merton.gov.uk and residents can also report illegal parking by calling 020 8545 4661

3 BISHOPFORD ROAD BRIDGE UPDATE (Agenda Item 3)

Paul McGarry, Head of Future Merton, and James McGinlay, Assistant Director for Sustainable Communities, from Merton Council provided an update on the bridge. They apologised for the inconvenience to residents, this was not an event that could be predicted. Heavy rainfall and flooding in June had resulted in water eroding the foundations of the bridge resulting in one arch collapsing and serious damage to another.

Work since has focused on stabilising the structure in order to make it safe for inspections and repairs. Over the last month, the bridge has been stabilised with the hole in the riverbed filled and concrete injected into the arches. Two reports have been commissioned: one on what caused the collapse; and another into the options to repair or replace the bridge. The initial investigation meant leaving the bridge as was in order to analyse the structure. The options appraisal with designs will report back before Christmas.

In addition to the bridge itself there have been issues with vehicles/mopeds crossing the footbridge, bus diversions and utilities. In response we have installed CCTV with Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) and lighting to improve safety on the footbridge and have been working with TfL to put on an additional bus service from Ravensbury to Morden. We are currently waiting for a provider to be appointed. Utility lines were broken in the bridge collapse, and whilst the electric supply was replaced, the gas supply was redirected through the existing network. With demand for gas now increasing as we go into winter there will need to be new works to secure the supply.

We are also installing new hoardings around the site. There will also be a monthly newsletter, and updates to the [website](#) whenever there is news. We are considering at taking down wall between bridge and Watermeads so that people feel safer following feedback from residents. This could be a temporary measure until bridge is completed.

Residents asked a number of questions and these are set out with the response below.

Question	Response
Did Merton consider providing free shuttle bus service	Shuttle service frequency requires large number of vehicles so TfL can provide a more reliable service
Has Merton checked the safety of other bridges?	We are responsible for over 50 bridges. Funding from TfL supports inspections of bridges across the

	borough, which then leads to capital programme for improvements. It was a survey taken out on Bisphodford Road that lead to works on bridge as they identified it need strengthening
Has Merton considered building a temporary bridge?	We have looked at temporary bridge options but the underpinning for a new structure would impact on riverbed and riverbank and therefore river flow.
Did the weight of vehicles affect the bridge?	We will look at if weight might have had an impact
There are pools of water at either end of the footbridge	Paths were gravel, which was being disturbed by extra use, we will be replacing with tarmac and widening shortly.
Going through the park makes people vulnerable and is frightening. Consider this when rebuilding the bridge	Will look at improving footpath in new bridge
What was the cause of collapse related to the works taking place?	Independent study will come back next month and will include lead up to the event. We always have a method statement for works, which also needs to be agreed by Environment Agency when over the river.
What contingency planning was done?	We have contingency plans for dealing with emergencies including flooding.
The barriers on the footbridge are not accessible	We are happy to look at barriers; they are there to prevent vehicle access. We are currently collating data on impact of ANPR
How long will LBM take to make a decision?	The report will provide options, whilst the decision making process depends on level of spend, as below a threshold certain can be done without any further reports but if over then it goes to Cabinet for a decision. A Repair could be a few months, where as a rebuild could be much longer, into summer 2020.
The gassworks has impacted on traffic in Morden	We meet with utility companies to plan but if it's an emergency we can't wait. With Ravensbury works it is better to do these now before the winter demand picks up. We can monitor traffic along with TfL, and have moved diversion signs to Rose Hill to redirect traffic away from the area. We will stop non-essential works whilst Bridge is out.
Footbridge is a drinking area and dark	We have installed lighting to make people feel safer
Does wall bare load for the bridge	The wall is not part of the bridge
5 October temporary traffic	We can look at local signage

4 CLIMATE EMERGENCY (Agenda Item 4)

Katie Halter, Climate Officer for Merton Council informed residents about the Climate Emergency unanimously declared by the Council in July.

The declaration requires the borough to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Data from National Statistics indicate that Merton was responsible for emitting over half a million tonnes of greenhouse gases in 2018. Gas (50%) and electricity (25%) used in Merton's buildings, and the use of petrol and diesel transport (25%) were mainly responsible. The amount of greenhouse emissions could potentially double if you include emissions that arise from goods purchased in the Borough, or activities by Merton by residents outside the borough, such as flying.

There are three specific commitments in declaration

1. Specific dates to reduce emissions – Merton Council carbon neutral by 2030; the borough as a whole by 2050.
2. Create a Climate Emergency Action Plan by early 2020
3. Create a Climate Emergency Working group to gather evidence and ideas, which will contribute to the formation of the Action Plan.

The targets are challenging, it means 12% annual reduction to achieve this, which implies the decarbonisation of around 3000 properties improved a year and 2,500 of the 72,000 petrol and diesel cars registered in Merton will need to be replaced by electric or active travel per year. Merton Council responsible for 2.5% of emissions, the rest are from homes and businesses in the borough.

For more information on the Climate emergency declaration, please see:
<https://www.merton.gov.uk/planning-and-buildings/sustainability-and-climate-change/climate-emergency>

Katie set out how residents could get involved

- Individual choices are critical – especially energy use, diet, and travel. [Sustainable Merton](#) has a helpful [checklist](#)
- Community Projects – the Council would like to support setting them up or hearing about them
- Climate action plan – please get involved in the consultation on the action plan when it begins in October, we welcome new ideas
- [Solar Power Together](#) – run by Mayor of London – they have vetted solar panel providers through collective bargaining power. Depending on how many sign up they will agree a supplier who will conduct a survey and agree a final

price. Last year got 35% discount and they had good feedback on installations.

A resident asked about the connection between climate emergency and air quality and Katie responded that there was an overlap between the two so we would looking at the existing Air Quality Action Plan to identify synergies. For example, Merton has been working on education on engine idling, with signs going up and volunteers recruited. Following education of drivers then enforcement maybe necessary. A resident also asked about wood burners and Katie said that the national [Government Air Quality Strategy](#) includes consulting on removing the right to burn wood in built up areas.

A resident said that tall buildings can shade out existing solar panels, and can create microclimates. Katie said that we will be bringing in expertise to look at the sustainability of plans in Merton and this will include energy efficiency and being independent of gas. The plans that develop will apply across all regeneration projects.

A resident asked how young people will be involved. Katie said that she had already attended a Youth Parliament meeting and will be working with them and our Young Advisors to design survey to target children and young people. We will also create a young people's advisory panel.

A resident asked about TfL moving to electric buses in Merton and Katie said we were aware of TfL plans to change over their fleet and can take on board for the action plan.

UPDATE following the meeting: Residents can get involved by completing a [survey](#) so their ideas can be included or contact future.merton@merton.gov.uk.

5 COUNCIL UPDATE (Agenda Item 5)

Councillor Alambritis provided an anonymous case study of a 96-year-old man who lives independently but on his own. After a fall, he was diagnosed with Alzheimer's and already had Type 2 Diabetes. Merton Council's Reablement team has worked with the resident to create a Reablement Plan including four visits a day, with new equipment to make his home accessible, a MASCOT alarm, and referred him to Age UK Merton for support. The resident is now regaining his confidence and attending Wimbledon Guild to reduce his isolation. 45% of Merton Council controllable income goes on Adult Social Care and also supports groups like Wimbledon Guild and the Warm and Well project with £1m for the voluntary sector. Committed in the July Principles in 2011 to prioritise vulnerable residents.

Merton looks after more than 200 children and has a good rating from Ofsted on children's services. Four of our care leavers went on to University this year. Merton Council is looking at how we support students with special needs and lobbying the government to help fund this work.

Veolia still not good enough so continuing to push, but still some benefits including £1m in savings increasing recycling to 45% and reducing landfill. Friends of the Earth rated Merton joint 2nd in London for tackling climate change.

Thanks to volunteers to are essential to providing services. We are continuing to support VCS with £1m including MVSC and Merton and Morden Guild and Friends in St Helier (FISH).

Merton supports regeneration schemes like AFC Wimbledon move to Plough Lane, designating the old dog track for sporting intensity to make sure the site was protected.

We will work to keep all services at St Helier. The hospital is improving but needs new facilities on the existing site as that is where the most need is.

Merton Council has decided to keep all libraries open, despite 500 libraries closing nationally. The new library in Colliers Wood came second in a Library of the Year competition. Volunteers are vital in keeping libraries going and being innovative.

Nearly all schools in Merton are good or outstanding. Twenty-three primary schools have been expanded to address demand and a new secondary school in South Wimbledon is already oversubscribed. Adult Education also going from strength to strength under Merton College having saved the service from the impact from reduced central government funding.

We are supporting regeneration if three Clarion estates; and supporting other providers like Haig Homes housing veterans. Her Majesty the Queen opened 60 new units last Friday at Haig Homes in Morden.

MyLondon rated Merton as fourth best borough for families, based on the quality of schools, housing costs and services for families.

A Brexit Task Group is looking at the implications especially of a no deal Brexit, and is meeting monthly. We have also updated our Risk Register and have been supporting the 24,000 EU residents in Merton to access Settled Status, through funding a support worker Merton and Lambeth CAB, based in Morden and providing a document scanning service at the registry office in Morden. We are also monitoring Hate Crime incidents and looking at challenge for social care in terms of recruiting staff.

Bishopford Rd Bridge have the monies for the work, will hold a special Cabinet meeting if needed to speed up the process.

A resident asked about active travel, and if there were plans to replace cycling officer. Cllr Alambritis said he would be happy to raise with officers. A resident asked about lids for recycling boxes to stop waste being blown around. These are currently only available from Garth Road which can only be accessed by car so could alternative distribution locations be identified. Cllr Alambritis said he would be happy to look at the options for this.

A resident asked if there would be lift access in the Clarion regeneration for blocks of four stories. Cllr Alambritis said this would be in the detail of the planning applications so would follow up if the relevant details could be [emailed](#) to him.

6 DATE OF NEXT MEETING (Agenda Item 6)

Councillor Draper thanked residents for attending and closed the meeting.

The next meeting will take place on Wednesday 26 February at 7.15pm in the Council Chamber at the Civic Centre.