

From: David Stephenson
To the Cabinet Member for Street Cleanliness and Parking

Why does this unfair levy only apply to council tax payers who live in a controlled parking zone? What about diesel drivers in the rest of the borough? Are you not discriminating against those in controlled parking zones simply because you have their car details?

Reply

Air Quality in London is a Public Health Emergency according to experts and reported in the House of Commons. Merton is exercising its powers to respond to this emergency in the best way it can. It is well known and scientifically proven that diesel cars contribute much more damage to London's poor air quality and the health issues arising. We are following many other boroughs in implementing a surcharge on residents purchasing parking permits for diesel vehicles. We are unable to directly deal with motorists outside of these zones but acknowledge that work is underway by the Mayor of London to address this. This is not discriminatory but simply an illustration of the powers we have and the fact that we are utilising them to do what we can to clean up London and Merton's air.

From: Tony Burton
To the Cabinet Member for Environment, Housing and Regeneration

Will Merton Council publish its pre-application advice on development proposals for the site of the Burn Bullock and Mitcham cricket pavilion and inform the tenants - Mitcham Cricket Club - when it has been provided?

Reply

Currently the council does not automatically publish its pre application advice on-line. These are not formal planning applications and there is no statutory requirement to place the information on line. As it is not a formal application there is also no requirement to inform the tenants. However, the council is reviewing its position regarding publishing pre-application advice, balancing the confidentiality some applicants expect with the public interest in such issues.

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

When will the Listed Building Repair Notice issued in August 2014 for the Burn Bullock be enforced and what action is being taken to remove this listed building from the national Heritage at Risk Register where it remains despite works done thus far?

Reply

The owner of the property has been working with the council since the service of the notice and significant repairs to the building have been made. However, it is considered premature to seek removal of the property from the Risk Register at this

stage as it is considered important that enforcement powers be retained if matters deteriorate for any reason.

From: Simon McGrath

To the Cabinet Member for Environment, Housing and Regeneration

What is the % of affordable housing in developments approved by Merton Council since 1.1.2017?

Reply

Between 01 January 2017 and 31 March 2017 Merton Council has issued one decision notice for a major housing development that provided affordable homes. The planning decision (Forestcove Road 16/P3430) provided 11 affordable rented homes and 5 starter homes (homes to be sold at a discount in perpetuity), a total of 22%; Merton's Planning Applications Committee resolved to grant permission for other major housing developments during the same time period (for example at 25 High Path, which will provide 80 affordable rented homes (60% of the total). This application has been referred to the Mayor Of London who may decide to determine the application himself or allow Merton's decision to approve stand.

From: John Davis

To the Cabinet Member for Environment, Housing and Regeneration

Given that another tree planting season has ended, I ask when will Merton Council / Rediscover Mitcham /TfL plant the Liquidambar feature tree proposed in the tree planning for Rediscover Mitcham at Fair Green? Further, when is it envisaged that reported dead and vandalised street trees will be replaced?

Reply

Major construction is still taking place on and around the Fair Green, therefore the new trees to be planted along the edge of the Green will be planted next season. This avoids risking damage to the trees during the construction period.

In general terms, Merton Council's policy is to apply arboricultural first-aid measures to vandalised trees wherever practical and to replace dead street trees where it is necessary. Where a tree is repeatedly vandalised and may need replacing, it is often more practical to seek an alternative location for its replacement. Each case is therefore considered on its own merits depending on the circumstances of the tree's death or damage.

In some cases, the damage may have occurred as collateral damage as part of a local development project, for example, and the completion of the associated works may determine where the replacement tree is sited to maximise the chances of its growth and survival.

Regrettably, it is not always possible to replace every dead tree during the same financial or calendar year that it expired owing to the demands of the operational service and given that the core replanting season typically occurs between

December to March, and planting works are pre-planned between September and November.

From: Daniel Weir

To the Cabinet Member for Environment, Housing and Regeneration

What are Merton Council going to do about Rowan Park? The park should been handed over to Merton Council a public space over 3 years ago per the section 106 on Rowan development (20.23 and 20.24) and is falling into disrepair.

http://planning.merton.gov.uk/MVM.DMS/Planning%20Application/1000060000/1000060451/07P1216_S106%20Agreement.pdf

Reply

THIS QUESTION WILL BE ANSWERED BY THE CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY AND CULTURE

Three years ago Rowan Park was not in a suitable state to be handed to the Council. Over the last 3 years, a number of design and maintenance issues have been resolved. The landscape has also matured during that timeframe making it a more attractive environment for the enjoyment of local residents.

The Council's Greenspaces team is actively engaged with the site developer to finalise the handover of the park to Merton. The final checks are being carried out and are expected to be completed this month, with a view to handing over the site shortly afterwards. The Longthornton ward councillors have worked hard for their residents on this issue and I am looking forward to their being able officially open the park after such a long time.

Supplementary

I just want to know what action plan there is for the Park. The state it is in at the moment, with no discernible change. I've actually walked around with yourself and Ged Curran; Councillors have been down there, I believe that the place has been mis-managed by Crest Nicholson and we've ended up in a catch 22 situation that Merton won't look after the Park as should have been agreed after 3 months, let alone 3 years, I just want to know what action comes. We as residents, I've spoken to residents who have living there since the beginning, both in the park and in the surrounding area have seen no discernible improvement in the standards, I've got photos which show the weeds growing everywhere, the flooding arrangements, the flood storage capacity which is meant to be helping with the drainage, you can't even see the drainage tunnels anymore, we are all just fed up. We are really worried that this is our chance that we only just found about, it is going to be handed over in the state that it is actually in. It is very upsetting for lots of young families that have moved onto the park who have been promised the park would be in an acceptable state.

What points can we as residents put down that can agreed so the state of the park plan will be there when it is handed over?

Reply

I'd like to thank you Daniel for your question. As it stands at the moment, we are undergoing what is called "snagging". I have to tell you that the first time I inspected the Park in any depth was in January this year where it was an extremely wet and cold day. But I saw a park that had a good deal of promise. I want to assure you that the park won't be handed over until it is in a decent state, and a decent state will be determined by our officers and I will be there at that meeting as well. In the longer term, I want to work with you, and I know your ward councillor wants to work with you as well, to make sure that the park becomes better and better over time, and I would like to extend this invitation to you to work with me after this to ensure that the park that you want is the park that you get.

From: Richard Hilton
To the Cabinet Member for Finance

What progress has there been with the formal investigation into the Labour Leader of Merton Council, Cllr Alambritis over the Council Tax 'consultation'? When will the investigation conclude and will the results of the investigation be fully disclosed to the public?

Reply

I understand that the investigation is complete and the results will be presented to a meeting of the Standards and General Purposes Committee. I strongly believe that it is right that we listen to all of our residents, particularly on issues such as council tax which have a disproportionate impact on the poorest in our community.

Supplementary

That Merton Labour Group misused public funds is not in question. I would like to know, if the results of the investigation into misconduct by the Leader of the Council for his sham consultation will be made public? If not, will the Conservative Group be following up on it? Has the Council referred themselves to the Information Commissioner, given that it is admitted that the nearly 3000 responses were passed to the Merton Labour Group even though they were sent back in official Merton Council headed letters? Thank you.

Reply

Thank you for his supplementary. The report has been finalised but hasn't been published yet, so far as I am aware. When it is published I understand that it will be published for the general public. I don't know what the conclusions are going to be; whether it is shown that there is misuse of public funds, but the one thing that I would say, is that anybody who comes here wishing to constrain the rights of us Councillors to speak to our residents about the important issues like the Council Tax, shouldn't be involved in politics. I know he is involved in UKIP which amounts to the same thing. I would strongly urge everyone involved in local politics to allow and enable Councillors to speak to their residents about important matters and to receive feedback from them in the way that our residents want to present that feedback.

From: Laura Paine
To the Cabinet Member for Education

Which schools in Merton are likely to lose funding overall under the government's new funding formula? Can you provide a list?

Reply

The main differences between the National Funding Formula and Merton's Funding Formula are as follows:

- The amount for the basic per pupil funding (Age-Weighted Pupil Unit) is less than Merton's current formula.
- The amounts for additional needs funding (deprivation, lower attainment and English as an additional language) are higher than Merton's current formula.
- The lump sum will be £110,000 under the national funding formula compared to Merton's £150,000.

This means that, although Merton as a whole will be getting more funding under the new formula, some schools will see an increase while other will see a decrease. The funding flow will be to schools in more deprived areas and where attainment is lower.

Also, due to the reduction in lump sum, small schools are more likely to see a reduction in their funding.

Based on the 2016/17 funding formula and the consultation formula values, which are all subject to change, the following schools will see a reduction in the national funding formula:

- Dundonald Primary School
- Hatfeild Primary School
- Hollymount School
- Merton Park Primary School
- Wimbledon Park Primary School
- St Matthew's CofE Primary School
- Holy Trinity CofE Primary School
- Bishop Gilpin CofE Primary School
- Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School
- St John Fisher RC Primary School

The above describes the changes in cash terms and does not take account of inflation, salary or pension contribution increases which would then result in real term reductions as has been reported by various institutions, including London Councils.

From: Derek Sendall
To the Cabinet Member for Environment, Housing and Regeneration

How many names were on the petition to start the cpzwc3 Pitcairn Road ?
How many paper voting forms were sent out for cpzwc3?

Why is Island Road being victimised over cpzcw3?

Why will the council or councillors not listen to the concerns of the people who live in the area?

Reply

We received a petition from 125 residents in Arnold, Road Finborough Road, Pitcairn Road and Crusoe Road.

In response to requests from residents, we sent out 69 questionnaires in hard copies.

The Council carries out careful and comprehensive 2 stage consultations with all consultees in proposed CPZs . The initial informal consultation was completed and based on the results the Council progressed to the statutory consultation. The Council considered all feedback received from residents on individual roads, and in this case, the majority of residents of Island Road consistently voted against the scheme even if neighbouring roads were to be included within a CPZ. Having considered the feedback received, and consulted with your local councillors, the road was excluded from the controlled parking zone in line with the wishes of residents.

Supplementary

I'd like to refer you to the paper: August 19th 2016 on paragraph 3.1.

Why was the vote that took place in 2015 not on the papers for the petition that was put forward? The petition again was put forward in 2016 for another vote which I believe is totally illegal. Also, I've only received this today from the Freedom of Information, that 15 people voted on forms on the CPZ and there was nowhere that the numbers of these 15 people are anywhere on the paper, it's only online.

Reply

I'd like to thank Mr Sendall for his supplementary questions. In terms of the CPZ consultation; we urge everybody to respond on the proper forms which are sent out from the Council in terms of Controlled Parking Zone consultations. In relation to his own situation, we have listened very closely to residents on his road and have exempted Island Road from the Controlled Parking Zone so Mr Sendall you won't be included in that zone following my decision and following representations from residents. Thank you.

From: Viv Vella

To the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health

What projects is the council undertaking with the local CCG and Better Care Fund to better integrate health and social care services and improve outcomes for residents - in particular for residents with dementia?

Reply

05_Public Questions

The council and CCG, along with other NHS and voluntary sector partners, have had a shared integration programme in place since 2013. We have 4 over-arching objectives: to reduce emergency admissions to hospital, to reduce lengths of stay in hospital, to reduce admissions to care homes, and to improve patient experience.

To achieve this we are seeking to provide more integrated services in the community. We have had liaison social workers in place since 2013 in order to improve communication with our primary care and community service NHS colleagues. We have been providing training and support for front line staff on integrated and person centered working. Recently NHS community staff have co-located with our staff in the civic centre. We have an integrated equipment service. For the forthcoming year we will be looking more closely at how we work together to assist discharge from hospital including our intermediate care/re-ablement services.

Specifically for people with dementia, some of our social workers are co-located and managed in the mental health trust service for older people, in order to provide a more integrated service. Some of the BCF funding has been used for dementia community nurses.

From: Debbie Wambergue
To the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health

How much has the council invested in services to support people with dementia in each of the last 5 years?

Reply

Adult Services spends nearly £23m per annum on care and support services for older people, as well as providing social work and support to the voluntary sector. Our systems do not currently enable us to distinguish between spend on people with dementia as opposed to older people with other care needs. The table below shows our spend on older people care placements over the last ten years, which includes significant spend on dementia services. The 2016/17 figures are provisional pending the closure of the year's accounts.

	F/Y 2007/08	F/Y 2008/09	F/Y 2009/10	F/Y 2011/12	F/Y 2011/12	F/Y 2012/13	F/Y 2013/14	F/Y 2014/15	F/Y 2015/16	(Jan'17) 2016/17
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
OP care	18,814	17,318	19,090	21,559	21,559	21,595	21,508	21,502	21,489	22,808
Dementia Hub	346	330	250	250	250	209	232	239	239	239

As well as supporting various services for older people in the voluntary sector, the Council has funded the Dementia Hub since April 2013 with annual Council funding of £239,000.

From: Victoria Wilson

To the Cabinet Member for Environment, Housing and Regeneration

What representations has the Council made to the new operators of South West Trains in relation to service improvements and the introduction of step-free access at stations in Merton?

Reply

Officers met with Stagecoach on 2 occasions to discuss our aspirations and sent a letter of support setting out our views including desire to see step free access at both Raynes Park and Motspur Park Stations. However, it did not prove possible to meet First/MTR Group representatives within the consultation timeframe permitted. Significant South West Train franchise infrastructure improvements including congestion relief at Wimbledon Station remain intrinsically linked with the progression of Crossrail 2. The council will also lobby as opportunities arise for accessibility improvements to Thameslink and Southern stations within the borough including step free access.

From: John Tippett-Cooper

To the Cabinet Member for Children's Services

Does Merton Council have any capacity to accommodate further unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and was Merton Council contacted by the Home Office/other Government Department in respect of this capacity to care for and support unaccompanied asylum-seeking children prior to Mr Robert Goodwill's announcement on 8 February 2017 (written statement HCWS467)?

Reply

Merton is part of a Pan London arrangement to distribute unaccompanied asylum seeking young people across the capital. Each month we get children allocated through this agreement and as result of this steady flow and the Dubs and Dublin Treaty children arrival before Christmas, the majority of London boroughs are now at or nearly at the 0.07% nationally agreed threshold. Merton is not yet at the cap and is still taking children through the rota on a regular basis. We anticipate that we will be needed more frequently now many of the other boroughs have reached their cap number. There is always some movement, however as when young people reach 18 and become care leavers they are taken away from a borough's quota/cap but obviously remain in local authority care with support. Through London Councils we continue to lobby government for adequate funding to enable us to continue to support unaccompanied asylum seeking young people both whilst they are in care and as care leavers.

We do not have a record of Home Office contact in February but on other occasions we have been able to offer specific placements for one or two children depending on the availability of our foster carers and our ability to commission appropriate placements.

From: Philip Ling

To the Cabinet Member for Environment, Housing and Regeneration

How many diesel vehicles are used by the Council, including those in outsourced services e.g. refuse collection? What plan does the Council have to reduce this number considering they are also encouraging local residents to reduce diesel vehicle usage?

Reply

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

The greenspaces contract with ID Verde uses 18 vehicles, all of which are diesel. On the waste and street cleaning contract with Veolia, 68 are diesel. The vast majority of which are refuse collection vehicles. By entering into joint contracts with neighbouring authorities, we are enabling the contractors to make the most efficient use of the vehicles through cross boundary working and optimisation of the collection rounds thus reducing overall emissions.

The new waste collection service which is due to commence in October 2018 will bring a new fleet of collection vehicles of the most modern and efficient standard thus further reducing emissions compared to the current fleet.

The Council is currently reviewing its in-house Transport Services to ensure it is operating as efficiently and cost effectively as possible. This review will include an analysis of the current fleet and consideration of our future fleet vehicle requirements which will also consider the carbon dioxide and nitrous oxide emissions with an aim to reduce these as much as possible whilst still delivering value for money for our residents.

From: Anthony Fairclough

To the Cabinet Member for Environment, Housing and Regeneration

What actions have been taken by the Council in each of the last 5 years to support tenants in the private rented sector?

Reply

The Council supports private sector tenants in numerous ways over many years, and not just in the last five

This support includes

- 1/ Advice and Assistance on security of tenure and Protection From Eviction
- 2 Advice and Assistance on Housing disrepair
- 3/ Enforcement action against non compliant Landlords in accordance with the Housing Act 2004 and associated Legislation
- 4 / Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation, Housing Act 2004

5/ Appropriate advice and assistance on rehousing options, debt management and welfare reform

6/ Drop in Service on a daily basis for private tenants to meet with officers

7/ Delivery of Disabled Facilities Grants where necessary and appropriate and reasonable and practicable.

From: Richard Hackforth-Jones

To the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health

What is the council planning to do in relation to improve support for people with dementia over the next 2 years and how much will the council invest to achieve this?

Reply

Funding for the Dementia Hub for 2017/18 is £239,000. The Council will be re-commissioning the Dementia Hub services in 2018 jointly with the CCG as part of the 2017/18 BCF plan. In addition the council spends approximately £23m on care and support services for older people, some of which goes towards support for people with dementia.

In March 2017 the Council launched its commitment to be a 'Dementia Friendly Community' by 2020. Our aim is to make the day to day life of people living with dementia easier, such as using shops or local services. The launch brought together the Council, CCG, Alzheimer's Society, police and other statutory agencies, voluntary sector and community groups, all committing to take action to make Merton a dementia friendly community.

Over the next two years the Council through the Dementia Action Alliance (DAA) will focus efforts to increase and widen membership of the DAA. We will undertake work to get shops and businesses to undertake Dementia Friends training. Information and awareness raising will also be carried out. Larger projects are also planned including a 'dementia friendly library'.

The Council has plans to be part of the 'Coordinate My Care' project. CMC is a joint approach between health, social care and LAS in identifying residents who are at the 'End of Life' care/Gold Standard Framework. The principles of the CMC are to ensure a multi-disciplinary approach in care/support planning for this client group and also promoting information sharing between relevant organisations.

From: Vincent Bolt

To the Cabinet Member for Street Cleanliness and Waste

Would it be possible for the council to pull out of the proposed arrangements for wheelie bins/waste collections, if so what would the costs be, now, and after May 2018?

Reply

The Council, in partnership with Croydon, Kingston and Sutton Councils has just let a contract for waste collection that will run for the next 8 years. Under this contract Merton's waste collection arrangements are due to change from October 2018. The

arrangements will be the optimal arrangements to save money, keep the streets clean and increase recycling. As a consequence, the Council will save c£2.2m per annum in operational budgets. The new collection arrangements are expected to increase the recycling rate. The financial impact of this improvement is yet to be fully financially quantified and will be dependent upon market conditions which change over time.

The contractual arrangements can be changed by negotiation with the contractor Veolia. It is not possible to state what the cost of changing the planned waste collection arrangements would be without detailed negotiations with the contractor and also taking into account the financial impact on other parties to the contract.

The Council could withdraw from the contract completely – again it is not possible to state what the cost would be without substantial work but the financial impact would be significant. The change would not only expose the Council to potential breach of contract but also result in further costs of procuring a service together with the liability for any increased costs that would fall to Merton if the cost of the joint contract for the remaining partner boroughs increased as a result of Merton's decision.

From: Claire Bolt

To the Cabinet Member for Environment, Housing and Regeneration

What discussions have the council had with housing associations in Merton in relation to supporting the government's estate regeneration programme - in particular, have the council supported any funding bids to refurbish or rebuild any estates in Merton, such as the funding recently awarded to Clarion?

Reply

The Council has raised the government's estate regeneration programme with another Housing Association with housing stock in the borough who, whilst confirming they were aware of the programme, decided that they did not wish to apply.

From: Emma Maddison

To the Cabinet Member for Environment, Housing and Regeneration

Please could I ask the council how many empty commercial properties were there in the borough in each of the last five years and currently?

Reply

QUESTION TO BE ANSWERED BY THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE

The council does not hold data on private properties. However the number of council owned commercial empty properties is as follows:

2012 = 26 Empty Commercial Properties

2013 = 16 Empty

2014 = 8 Empty

05_Public Questions

2015 = 6 Empty

2016 = 10 Empty

The current number empty = 9

Please note that the figures for each year includes all those that have become vacant during that year but may have been relet within the year

From: Nicola Reade-Lyons

To the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance

How can I be sure that my latest subject access request (SAR) won't be heavily redacted or tampered with as has happened on my 3 previous attempts?

Reply

The rules governing disclosure of third party information is covered by section 7(4) of the Data Protection Act. The council will redact information if it cannot comply with a request without disclosing information relating to another individual, who can be identified from that information.

Detailed guidance is found in the ICO's subject access code of practice;
<https://ico.org.uk/media/for-organisations/documents/1065/subject-access-code-of-practice.pdf>

From: Andrew Boyce

To the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance

Does Council agree the importance of listening to the views of local residents on decisions it makes which may impact that community and on which there is strong local support or opposition?

Reply

Broadly speaking, yes we think it is important for the views of residents to be part of the decision making progress. However, we make decisions in the wider interest of all residents, and not those of individual residents. For example, planning applications are on occasion opposed by some residents, and they often believe that their views have "strong local support", but decisions have to be made based on a wider basis than this. Similarly, social media can have a distorting effect on a person's perceptions; he or she may believe that their views have strong support based on a small number of "likes", but the council has to make decisions in the best interests of around 200,000 residents, and that small sample of "likes" is unlikely to be representative.

Supplementary

I wasn't planning to ask a question tonight, but I came along to watch the debate and the discussion on the South Wimbledon Residents Motion but I do now have a question prompted by that. Can the Deputy Leader of the Merton Labour Group please explain why he had the arrogance to amend a residents-led motion on South

Wimbledon which not only undermined the spirit of that motion, but has probably undermined some of the work that has been happening quite successfully thus far on it?

Reply

I'd like to thank you for the supplementary; the debate will come later and I am quite happy for colleagues to talk about it then. The work that the local Councillors for the Labour Party have done in the South Wimbledon Abbey area has been immense in standing up for their constituents and includes a great deal of things that were not included in that motion, and we felt it was important that the work of the whole Community should be recognised and my understanding is that is the reason for the changes. Please do wait around and listen to the debate.

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