

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.

London borough	All temporary housing types
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
Havering	738

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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>

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.

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.

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 1st 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 is 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.

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.

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 or call 0208 545 3173

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.

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 bases 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.

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.