

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 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.