

Mitcham Community Forum
23 January 2018
Chair's Report

The meeting was held at Mitcham Library, and chaired by Councillor Ian Munn. 30 residents attended, as well as two other Councillors, and officers of the council and its partners. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Changes to Waste Collection services

Jeremy Gibson, Claire Secord, Neighbourhood Client Officers, and Graeme Kane, Assistant Director of Public Space, from Merton Council were joined by Will Graham from Veolia to set out the changes to waste collection services that will occur in October 2018. The presentation that gave can be found at: <https://www.merton.gov.uk/council-and-local-democracy/community-forums/mitcham-community-forum>

Will Graham explained that having the delivered the same package in Sutton it has become apparent that higher capacity is needed for plastic, glass, cans and cartons than for paper and card. As a result, consideration is being given to swapping the containers so that paper/card would remain in the existing boxes and other materials would be in the new wheelie bin.

Residents made a number of comments and questions and these are summarised below along with the response from the team.

Issue	Response
Current bins used by residents will not be removed by Merton	Wheelie bins previously purchased by residents will not fit the new vehicles so will need to be replaced. If residents cannot find new use they can be brought to Garth Road.
How should waste be presented currently	Current service is black sack; sacks should be presented on the edge of your property by 6am on morning of collection, except where other arrangements in place. Removing sacks from bins presents a safety risk to staff.
Lids for boxes	Existing boxes will be retained but new boxes in the future may be provided with lids.
Penalties for failing to recycle	Merton does not penalise residents for failing to recycle and has no plans to do so. Support and advice is available to help residents recycle more.
Problems getting through to Merton Council to order replacement or new equipment	Apologies for the difficulties causes. Details were taken away to help resolve the issue.
Recycling arrangements in flats	The current systems in place will remain.
Is collection of communal bins tracked?	Vehicle movements are all tracked but not the actual collection of the bins.
Food waste bins have been opened by animals	The boxes should be fairly robust, certainly compared to black sacks

Issue	Response
Redesigning of front gardens to accommodate new wheelies	We expect most households will have space but work is underway to assess which households can accommodate the new bins, which can accommodate some of the new services and which will need an alternative arrangement. This will be completed and reviewed in plenty of time for the new service.
How will the changes be communicated?	Leaflets will be delivered to each household with clear description of the changes and a calendar of collections.
What help is there for people who will struggle with the new bins?	The assisted collection service that is already provided will continue. More information is available at https://www.merton.gov.uk/rubbish-and-recycling/bins-bags-and-collection-services/putting-out-your-rubbish-and-recycling-for-collection
Will the new bins block pavements, especially where they are narrow?	Bins should be presented at the boundary of your property and should be returned there by the collection crews. If crews are continually failing to do this please report so additional training can be provided.
Does there need to be a black sack in for rubbish in the new wheelie bins?	This is up to residents, the contents will be collected regardless.
Will overspill from the wheelie bins be collected?	In the early weeks of the new service there will be an amnesty but after that the 180l capacity will be the maximum that will be collected.
What is the cost saving for Merton?	Officers were not able to give a specific figure but it was reported to Cabinet in July 2016 that the new contract would potentially result in revenue savings of up to £1.3m in year and up to £2.2m per annum from year 2.
Why does paper/card need to be collected separately from other recyclables.	Keeping paper dry and separate from other contaminants means paper can be sold at £70 per tonne. Otherwise it would cost £30 per tonne to dispose of.

A number of residents also wanted to raise specific issues about street cleaning. Details were taken outside the meeting.

Rediscover Mitcham update

James Geeson from the Future Merton team, Merton Council, updated the meeting on the works in Mitcham Town Centre. The project is nearly completed with only a few minor works to be completed. All the roads and signals are finished but teams are still on site to resolve snagging issues, complete furnishings, bollards, signage, and cycle stands. Data from the new signals is being analysed and the system will learn how to improve traffic flows. There will also be a review after six months of the whole scheme.

Residents had asked about the junction at St Marks Road, James explained that it was not planned to install a yellow box, they are expensive and often unwelcome because of the

penalty notices they generate. The junction will be monitored and this decision could be reconsidered. Traffic on Commonsides West was also raised. This is historically the most congested route into the town centre and has been difficult to tackle through this scheme. At the moment the works on Beddington Lane is making the issue worse but it will continue to be monitored.

A resident said Western Road was worse, but Church Road has improved. James said bus companies had reported improved times, but with the signal lights still learning improvements should be expected. Residents also reported issues with buses blocking London Road turning into Raleigh Gardens. James said this has been raised with the bus companies already but is happy to reinforce the need for drivers to obey the rules. James said they would review if there is a need for a yellow box was needed at the Morrison's car park exit.

James was asked if the green space was finished and if plans were in hand to honour the commitment to list them as a Town Greens. The works are not yet complete, better quality landscaping is needed to repair the damage done but construction works. James will check with colleagues on the Town Green process. James also said other colleagues are working on plans to encourage activity in the town centre and details can be shared with the Forum.

A resident asked about signal timing and if the focus could be shifted to pedestrians over vehicles. James said timings on signals conformed to national standards to be safe for pedestrians. The junction at Western Way by Lidl was too big for an all-stop diagonal crossing and Transport for London would not agree to such a long all-stop on a strategic road.

Residents raised concerns about the curbs in the staggered pedestrian crossings. James said the curbs were necessary to assist pedestrians with a visual impairment, but stone colour had been changed to improve the contrast of the curb. James also explained that it was not possible to have a speed limit lower than 20 mph on the perimeter road but additional signage would be installed. When asked about the budget James said that the original budget was £6.2m; the cost estimate of the detailed design was £6.9m and the final cost is likely to be around £7.2m. Final invoices from contractors should be submitted shortly and included in the Council accounts for 2017/18.

London Fire Brigade will be asked by Kris Witherington for an update on the old fire station.

Merton's Local Plan

Tony Burton from Mitcham Cricket Green Community and Heritage provide an update on the work the group has done to respond to the recent consultation on Merton's Local Plan. Tony's presentation is available at:

<https://www.merton.gov.uk/council-and-local-democracy/community-forums/mitcham-community-forum>

The Local Plan is important setting out the future development of Merton and local planning priorities. The group has identified 14 development sites around the Cricket Green area as well as 13 assets of community value. Tony also highlighted the huge potential of the Benedict Wharf site after it closes in 2019.

Tony said he expected Merton Council to report back on the responses to the consultation in the spring before the next phase, a consultation on an Issues and Options scheme in the autumn.

Councillor Munn informed residents Merton Council was also consulting on a Development Viability Supplementary Planning Guidance. When developers apply for planning permission, they must provide an appraisal of the financial viability of their development if they want to justify why their particular scheme cannot afford to meet all the council's planning policies and still remain economically viable. More information can be found at: <https://www2.merton.gov.uk/environment/planning/planningpolicy/spg/Development-viability-and-validation-checklist.htm>

Tony was asked about the Burn Bullock and replied that the owner had put forward plans for pre-application advice but having been told the plans were not suitable there had been no further contact. This is an important site with an opportunity to secure the future of the Cricket Pavilion so it is disappointing the owner refuses to engage with the community.

Tony also said that the Council had recently agreed that £5000 of Neighbourhood Fund money be made available for each ward to spend on small improvements to public space. This is due to be done in consultation with councillors but it is not clear yet how residents can get involved in the deciding how the money is spent. In the short term you could contact your local councillors with ideas.

Soapbox

A resident raised concern about the same graffiti tag appearing throughout Mitcham, Morden and Tooting. Graffiti can be reported online at www.merton.gov.uk and can be raised with local police Safer Neighbourhood Teams.

The role of Merton's new Housing Company was raised. Plans including the possible development of some of the car parks in Mitcham. Residents felt that as a principle development on Council owned land should be for affordable housing. Meetings of the Company Board are held in public and residents are welcome to attend.

Nell Allen asked residents to consider a motion to the Council that had previously been agreed at Wimbledon and Raynes Park Community Forums. The motion reads:

"We the attendees of the (Mitcham/Morden) Community Forum, request that Merton Council's Cabinet make time to discuss the following motion with Veolia's Merton Managers...

"ALL MERTON'S FUTURE WASTE BIN AND RECYCLING BOX PURCHASES SHOULD BE BROWN IN COLOUR (to match the food and garden waste bins), FREE FROM LBM LOGOS, WITH A SIMPLE SYMBOL FOR WASTE OR RECYCLING ON THE LID, IN BLACK (less conspicuous than white) - MAKING UNOBTRUSIVENESS A PRIORITY."

There was a clear majority of residents in attendance in favour of this motion being brought to the Council meeting on 7 February.

Councillor Munn thanked residents for attending and closed the meeting.

Date of next meeting: Wednesday 17 October at 7.15pm, in Mitcham Library