

07a\_Member Questions ST

From **Councillor Abigail Jones** to the **Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Environment and Housing**

Can the Cabinet Member please update Council on the development of the Wimbledon Plan?

Reply

The Council published the results of the Future Wimbledon workshops in September 2017 which set out the comments, maps, ideas and priorities from the local community and these have helped shape the content of the draft masterplan.

The draft masterplan is being finalised at the moment and will be available for consultation from late February 2018.

The draft plan sets out a vision for the future development of Wimbledon town centre and illustrates how the borough's existing planning policies will be applied to pre-application advice and planning applications between 2018-2020. The masterplan will act as interim planning guidance whilst Merton's new Local Plan is prepared. Any new planning policies or site allocations for Wimbledon will be progressed through the new local plan process.

From **Councillor Janice Howard** to the **Cabinet Member for Street Cleanliness and Parking**:

Can the council confirm that all the Christmas trees were collected by their own deadline of 21st January?

Reply

The Christmas tree collections were completed on schedule with all roads visited by the collection crews over a two week period from 8th January. Residents were advised to present their Christmas tree for collection no later than the 8<sup>th</sup> January. In total over 95tonnes of Christmas trees were collected over the two week period. Residents are able to report any missed collections or newly presented trees via our contact centre who will arrange for this information to be allocated to the contractor for collection.

From **Councillor Laxmi Attawar** to the **Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Environment and Housing**

What work has been undertaken by the council in encouraging modular housing developments?

Reply

Modular housing is one of the ways the government is encouraging the diversification of the housing market, to increase the number of new homes. Merton has led the way with the innovative partnership with YMCA to create Y-Cube in Mitcham, providing 36 affordable, energy efficient homes, which opened in 2015. We

are also in discussions with modular housing companies and registered providers about looking at options for its provision modular homes on suitable sites.

From **Councillor David Dean** to the **Cabinet Member for Street Cleanliness and Parking**:

Can the Cabinet Member tell me what the council is doing to tackle the outbreak of rats around Wimbledon town centre?

Reply

Merton Council have, since December 2017 arranged for the installation of humane rat traps and burrow baiting in the shrubbery around Wimbledon Town Centre; particularly at Gladstone Road which has attracted most complaints. We have also worked with Love Wimbledon BID who have undertaken a lot of engagement with local business to ensure that food waste is properly sealed and disposed of to minimise the food-source available to rodents.

From **Councillor Philip Jones** to the **Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Environment and Housing**

Following recent publication of the London Plan which doubled our housing target, how will the council set about meeting this revised figure?

Reply

The Council will be responding to the Mayor of London's London Plan consultation to ensure that the final adopted London Plan 2019 housing target for Merton is suitably ambitious but deliverable. Merton's current housing target is 410 homes per year and we have met this every year for the last 10 years. The new draft housing target is 1,328 homes per year. The council will explore sites and planning policies to deliver new homes as part of Merton's new Local Plan 2020.

From **Councillor Daniel Holden** to the **Cabinet Member for Street Cleanliness and Parking**:

What is the council doing to ensure the bins are collected on time?

Reply

Whilst a small number of missed collections will inevitably occur with any waste collection service owing to the volume of collections and the many circumstances that can arise across the borough, our officers work hard to keep the number of missed bins as low as possible.

Our teams work alongside our waste collection contractor to investigate waste collection issues in order to resolve them quickly for our residents. Our team, together with Veolia, liaise with managing agents and with residents to resolve issues. They do this by phone, email and face to face at site visits. The aim is to identify any underlying reasons why collections have been disrupted, and to resolve

them. The data on missed collections continues to show an improvement thanks to this work. We also use the data to identify properties that have reported repeat missed collections so we can resolve them before they occur again.

Where missed collections have reoccurred at individual properties, Veolia can add that property to the assured collection service. This requires the crew to manually log the collection as completed into the integrated 'In Cab' devices. Where an 'Assured Collection' cannot be made the crew are required to document why the collection was not undertaken. This assists in monitoring the performance of the crews and ensuring problems do not continue.

Where the contractor exceeds the contractual threshold of missed collections, financial deductions are applied to the monthly invoices. This incentivises them to resolve issues and avoid missed collections.

To avoid problems with collections, we request residents place their bins out for collection by 6am on collection day. They can report missed collections and check their scheduled collection day on the Merton website:

<https://www.merton.gov.uk/rubbish-and-recycling/collection-days-and-times>

From **Councillor Stan Anderson** to the **Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Environment and Housing**

How is the council working with key partners including TfL on the regeneration of Morden, and what are the next steps in the process?

Reply

The council is has been having positive discussions with major land owners within Morden town centre, which includes TfL, and are working very closely with all the different specialist teams within TfL.

Consultants have provided advice on the delivery of the regeneration of Morden town centre, which included positive responses from potential development partners. Their findings were presented to local ward councillors and a report was presented to the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel and to Cabinet on 15 January 2018.

The Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel recognised the scale, impact and opportunities of the planned Modern Regeneration Project and recommended to Cabinet that Merton Council should maintain sufficient control of the project. Cabinet approved the report's recommendations and authorised officers to proceed with negotiations with TfL, to formulate an appropriate joint venture structure.

The council and TfL have completed a memorandum of understanding and project managers have been appointed to assist the council and TfL with the next steps; to prepare for the joint procurement of a development partner in September/October 2018.

After the appointment of the development partner, we will work up detailed plans in collaboration with residents, businesses, ward councillors and the development partners.

**From Councillor Abdul Latif to the Cabinet Member for Street Cleanliness and Parking:**

Has the council performed a public health/environmental health impact assessment of its proposed new waste collection service?

Reply

There is no statutory requirement for a public health / environmental impact assessment. The collection service is similar to those used by many authorities across London and the country who use a combination of wheeled bins, alternate weekly collections with a weekly food waste service. The service is designed to be cleaner and safer than the current black bag service, which litters Merton's streets and attracts vermin, which tear open the bags. The service will also bring environmental benefits such as fewer vehicle movements, and the associated air quality benefits, and higher recycling rates.

An equalities impact assessment has been completed which has highlighted the need to undertake a review of existing waste policies to ensure that they support residents and address any concerns with the implementation of a wheeled bin collection service.

Merton Council will continue to offer an assisted collection service for those residents who are not physically or mentally able to present their bins for collections. This will ensure that elderly or disabled residents that meet the agreed criteria will not be expected to manoeuvre the bin ready for collection.

**From Councillor Geraldine Stanford to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Environment and Housing**

Following the recent completion of the Rediscover Mitcham project, will the Cabinet Member please give details of the improvements and benefits which have resulted from the works?

Reply

Merton Council and TFL have invested a significant amount of resources in Mitcham, from resident and business engagement, planning, funding and construction of the Rediscover Mitcham project.

The intention is to increase footfall in the centre, bringing 9 bus routes back through London Road, stopping outside the shops and cafes. We have increased and improved the open space, creating a square for a market and events and a bigger green space with feature lighting and seating areas. The café, Tag Aleez, has been improved with rebranding, new awnings and internal and external repairs and is now

a vibrant location for residents to visit and linger. There have been other business premises improvements made to many of the shops which has included internal alterations and improvements and new fronts and signage to enhance the High street.

The project also involved restoration of Mitcham's glorious clocktower, a new suite of festive lighting, a dedicated location for Mitcham's Christmas trees, a programme of public art works and restoration of Three Kings Pond. The Fair Green has been re-shaped closer to its original layout and the perimeter lanes have been re-established allowing for short-term parking in the centre.

The overall intention is to make Mitcham a place where residents want to visit and shop and for businesses to want to locate as part of our overall inward investment plans.

The removal of the pedestrian zone with the introduction of the perimeter street with a limited time to park, has brought more direct access and convenience for shoppers, especially those with accessibility difficulties. This has also contributed in the business trade. All the surrounding signalised junctions have been modified with the introduction of shorter crossing points for pedestrians giving quicker and more direct routes. Cyclist facilities have been added to provide safer protection and desirable, segregated journey routes for cyclists. Vehicle traffic flows and queues have been reduced on most approaches and movements through the town centre by complete redesign of these junctions and their signals. Bus journey times are more reliable with the dedicated bus route.

The project completed in January 2018. It's too early to fully understand the impact of the project but anecdotal feedback to far is that people and businesses are happy with the quality of the public realm and business in London Road has picked up.

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