

From Councillor Agatha Akyigyina to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Cleanliness:

What are the recycling targets for Merton and how will the changes to waste services help meet, and hopefully exceed, these targets?

Reply

Over the last 5 years Merton's recycling rate has plateaued at between 36-38% compared to an annual target of 42%. The new waste collection service has been designed to promote recycling at the kerbside and encourage residents to participate in the food waste service which will continue to be a weekly collection. With the current service of unlimited black sacks collected every week we have found it challenging to encourage our residents to participate in the food waste service. We currently estimate that less than 50% of our residents use this valuable service which directly contributes to our overall recycling performance and significantly reduces our disposal cost.

Our Neighbouring boroughs of Sutton and Kingston have already introduced this alternate weekly wheeled bin waste collection service and both have experienced an increase in recycling rates in excess of 45% .

From Councillor Adam Bush to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Cleanliness:

Does the Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Cleanliness consider that the administration has performed well with regards to recycling?

Reply

Yes, in the context of the current service and waste collection methodology but the proposed new service should significantly improve performance. Our ability to improve our recycling rate is directly attributed to our residents' engagement with the service and the methods of collection and storage employed.

To address this, we have carried out a comprehensive borough-wide communication programme, involving doorstep encouragement with the aim to achieve a sustainable behaviour change and encourage recycling and food waste diversion.

In addition to this last year Merton was one of the 5 successful London boroughs being funded by Resource London to carry out a food waste campaign. The campaign, partnered with Sainsbury's, with their "waste less save more" campaign.

Despite this level of engagement over the last 5 years our recycling performance has remained static between 36-38%. 21% of this waste can be attributed to the kerbside collection service, as such if we are to increase our overall recycling performance we need to encourage behaviour change at the kerbside and ensure that our waste collection service is designed to encourage our residents to recycle all suitable materials at the kerbside. Our new waste collection arrangements from October 1st should significantly improve performance.

From Councillor Eloise Bailey to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport

The Cabinet Member indicates in the Strategic Theme Report that he intends to argue against the “deliverability” of the 10 year housing target for Merton in the draft London Plan. Given the need for housing, can he outline what he intends to do to enable the housebuilding we need?

Reply

Merton Council absolutely recognises the very challenging situation that is London’s housing crisis and the Council is already working hard to accelerate the delivery of housing and proactively promotes development in a plan-led way. We have a significant amount of new housing planned such as 700 homes at Plough Lane, 2,900 planned through Clarion’s Estate Regeneration programme and the Council owned Merantun Development Ltd is progressing with delivering homes on small, council-owned sites.

Our Local Plan actively targets new housing growth in areas of good public transport accessibility and we are working with TfL and the Mayor of London to seek a development partner to deliver a major housing-led regeneration of Morden town centre. We are a proactive pro-growth borough and we have a lot of identified potential to deliver new housing, improved neighbourhoods and to boost our local economy – however good growth must be plan-led and created in dialogue with our local communities, which Merton’s regeneration, local plan and masterplanning projects are.

Merton’s annual housing target is currently 411 homes per year. We consistently achieve this target as it’s based on a sound assessment of land supply and good strategic planning. In 2016/17, our current monitoring year, 648 new homes were completed. This overachievement is down to completed large schemes at Colliers Wood Tower and Atkinson Morley boosting numbers.

Merton’s new housing target in the draft London Plan is 1328 homes per year. This ambitious target highlights the pressing need for homes. This would mean that Merton has to achieve twice as much housing as we delivered in 16/17.

To put the challenge into context, Merton would have to build the equivalent of the Colliers Wood tower every 8 weeks. Or two (existing) High Path estates every year.

Merton promotes a plan led approach and our new draft Local Plan and Call-for-Sites has identified developable land that can come forward for housing. We will be consulting residents on this in October 2018.

However, Merton is not blessed with lots of large brownfield sites ready for redevelopment. The Mayor’s target heavily relies on small-plot infill and expecting residents to redevelop their own homes at greater densities. In terms of Merton’s historic performance in small-sites and subdivisions over the past 10 years, we know that the GLA assumptions will be incredibly challenging.

We have made representations on the Mayor’s methodology applied to Merton via our response to the draft London plan and at the London Plan enquiry in autumn-winter this year.

The challenge for the council, and our residents who also clearly accept the need for more housing and more affordable housing is to work with the Council positively and identify and support development proposals through the planning system, our regeneration programmes and new local plan preparation.

We are a pro-growth borough but good growth has to be pitched at a deliverable level. We are working hard to ensure that Merton's housing target is fair, achievable and delivers the right kind of places that will make Merton an even greater place to call home.

From Councillor Sally Kenny to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Cleanliness

Can the Cabinet member confirm the number of prosecutions for flytipping in the past three years?

Reply

The number of Prosecutions in relation to fly tipping is 21, some of which have been to court and some are pending hearing dates. Of those that have been to court, they have resulted in positive outcomes, with fines issued.

The figures for £400 fines issued for fly-tipping offences are as follows:

Yr 16/17 total 16 paid fines

Yr 17/18 total 23 paid fines

Yr 18 to date total 12 paid fines

We continue to seek evidence and to pursue fly-tippers wherever and whenever we can, however this is extremely challenging.

From Councillor Ed Gretton to the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health

The Mayor of London has said that London is experiencing a 'public health crisis', linked in part to pollution. What steps has the Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Cleanliness [**Air Quality is in the portfolio of the Cabinet member for Adult Social Care and Health**] taken to ensure that the boroughs children are kept safe from air pollution?

Reply

I am acutely aware of the problem with Air Quality in London and within our own borough. There are areas within Merton, particularly along main roads, where air pollution levels are consistently high and where people including children experience significant amounts of exposure, with an impact on respiratory illness. I meet regularly with our Pollution colleagues and have made this a personal priority. Merton has produced a new Air Quality Action Plan 2018 – 2023 that covers the steps we will be taking to tackle pollution in our borough over the next 5 years. The plan has 70 measures over 9 different themes to tackle every aspect of the air pollution agenda.

This Plan was built on the work of the Council's Air Quality Task Group that reported directly to Scrutiny last year, with many action measures warmly welcomed throughout the borough. The Plan and its implementation is strongly supported by our colleagues in Public Health, who welcome the opportunity to work jointly to improve children's health and reduce the health inequalities that arise from air pollution, a key determinant of people's health.

The Plan is bold and in taking difficult but important decisions, such as levying polluting vehicles and investing in staff to deliver the plan. The plan also has a specific category aimed at schools and protecting our children.

I would urge my colleagues to read the Plan and support its implementation in the borough over the next 5 years.

Link to the AQAP:

<https://www2.merton.gov.uk/Merton%20AQAP%2020182023.pdf>

From Councillor Peter Southgate to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Cleanliness

Is Glyphosate/Glyphosate (marketed as Roundup) currently used as a herbicide by Merton Council for its contractors and is its future usage under review?

Reply

Glyphosate is currently used on both the parks grounds and highways maintenance contracts.

The Council has alerted its contractors to recent concerns these about his herbicide, they have confirmed they are reviewing matters with their suppliers.

The EU renewed the licence for the use of glyphosate-based weed killers, such as Roundup in 2017, it is licensed until 2022. Under UK and EU law it is therefore certified safe to use when applied by qualified staff as per the manufacturer's instructions. As such Merton's contractors will continue to use the product whilst this review is conducted.

From Councillor Joan Henry to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport:

Following the Mayor of London's investment in Electric Vehicle Charging Points, can the Cabinet member update us on the coverage and accessibility of these points across Merton?

Reply

There are currently 21 publically accessible (on-street) fast charge points (7kw) spread across the borough, which are able to charge a typical electric vehicle in 3-4 hours. A further 44 fast charge points are in the process of being commissioned by Source London.

The new Morden Leisure centre will provide an additional 5 fast charge points. A third batch of 39 charge points is currently going through the planning process and aim to be operational in late 2018/early 2019.

Transport for London are also rolling out a network of rapid chargers (50KW) across London capable of charging a vehicle in 15- 30 minutes including 2 chargers on London Road, Morden. These rapid chargers are aimed at taxis and other high

usage vehicles. As part of the Go Ultra Low Carbon Scheme (GULCS) Merton proposes to trial a number of lamp column chargers in 2019 aimed at overnight parking. The council is now ahead of target to deliver 125 publically assessable charge points by 2020/21.

We also have a number of charging points across the borough in new developments such as Brenley Park, Nelson Hospital, Asda Mitcham, Priory Retail Park and other off-street locations being negotiated as part of planning permissions.

Details of charging points in Merton and our roll-out programme are online at <https://www.merton.gov.uk/streets-parking-transport/electric-vehicle-charging-points> Our web page also links to Source London with an online map of all available charging points

From Councillor David Dean to the Cabinet Member for Community and Culture:

Will the Cabinet Member for Community and Culture clarify when the council intends to begin charging Little Leagues for using the boroughs sport facilities?

Reply

The Little Leagues currently enjoy a range of outdoor football pitches at various sites across the borough. The plan is that charging will commence for the forthcoming football season, beginning on Saturday 15th September.

From Councillor Anthony Fairclough to the Leader of the Council

Following his meeting with Michelle Dix on 4 July 2018 and his answer to a question from Cllr McGrath at full Council on the same day, what steps has the Leader of the Council taken to make the Independent Review on Crossrail 2 affordability, the Department of Transport and the Mayor of London aware of the his opposition to an additional tax on households living near a Crossrail 2 station?

Reply

Crossrail 2 is expected to cost £30bn. Given the recent delays with Crossrail 1, confidence may have been shaken with CR2. However Transport for London are not only committed to CR2, they have made it clear that affordability and funding is a clear priority to move to the next stage of planning.

Crossrail and Crossrail 2 are two separate projects. TfL are working closely with the DfT to further develop Crossrail 2 which is an essential part of the Mayor of London's Transport Strategy.

Crossrail 2's Independent Affordability Review has been considering ways to make the scheme more affordable. Following submission of its interim report to the Mayor and the Secretary of State, TfL await a decision on next steps which will allow the CR2 team to submit a Hybrid Bill in 2021 and begin construction by the mid-2020s.

It was confirmed in our meeting with Michele Dix that the land-value capture tax was just one of a wide range of potential funding scenarios being tested as part of the

Independent Affordability Review. It is right that CR2 and the Treasury assess all possible funding options, and it is just that; an idea that has to be considered. There is no firm proposal on the table for a local land tax to fund CR2, so, unless it does become a reality, we have no further information at present but will monitor closely.

The government delays in reaching a conclusion on Crossrail 2 are not only holding back economic growth, jobs and investment; the hiatus is causing concern in many of our communities where people and businesses simply want to know what's happening and Merton Council strongly urges the government to reach a positive conclusion soon so that we can all proactively plan for growth.

It's no surprise that government are pre-occupied with Brexit, to the detriment of other parliamentary business and nationally important projects such as CR2, HS2 and northern powerhouse rail. Investing in infrastructure should not be a north vs south choice for the government. Post-Brexit, UK still needs to invest in ageing and over capacity rail networks. The need for CR2 is clear.

London's population is still very much on the up, with the ONS expecting the capital to reach 10.1million by 2036 (that's a 14% increase from 2016). And with current services into Waterloo already running at capacity, the need to expand London's transport system is essential. Wimbledon Station will also reach peak capacity in the 2030s. Relieving overcrowding was Crossrail 2's primary objectives.

Our support for Crossrail 2 in principle remains. Merton and CR2 needs a decision from the government in order to determine with the CR2 team, the impact and also opportunity for new, essential infrastructure in Merton. We still believe that with Crossrail 2, it's a question of when, not if.

From Councillor Laxmi Attawar to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport:

How will the Mayor of London's Healthy Streets agenda be reflected in the regeneration of Morden Town Centre?

Reply

The Mayor's aim for 2041 is for 80 per cent of Londoners' trips to be on foot, by cycle or by using public transport. High quality public spaces can sustain this and can be achieved through a 'Healthy Streets Approach', measured by ten indicators which include (I suggest using the highlighted indicators):

1. Pedestrians from all walks of life
2. People choose to walk, cycle and use public transport
3. Clean air
4. Shade and shelter
5. People feel safe
6. Not too noisy
7. Easy to cross
8. People feel relaxed
9. Places to stop and rest
10. Things to see and do

Design details for the regeneration of Morden Town Centre will only be finalised once a deliverable scheme has been developed in collaboration with a development partner.

We have been working closely with our delivery partners, Transport for London, in preparation for the procurement of the development partner. Both parties recognise the need for Morden to be a healthier environment for residents, shoppers and commuters, and have adopted 'making Morden a London-wide exemplar of the Healthy Streets Approach' as core objective of the project.

Merton Council and Transport for London have jointly formed the Morden Town Centre Transport Steering Group, which is tasked with delivering the Mayor's Transport Strategy in Morden. This transport steering group is currently working to develop a set of requirements and parameters for the town centre, which will define how the Healthy Streets Approach can be realised through the Morden Town Centre project. This ongoing work is being directly supported by the same team that first created the Healthy Streets Approach, so we can be confident that the project will fully embody this Mayoral objective and become a good example of 'Healthy Streets' in London.

FM is working closely with Merton Public Health to ensure the Healthy Streets approach is adopted as part of the Morden Regeneration project by way of Health Impact Assessment, which is being produced by Public Health.

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

In light of the repeated failings of Veolia to keep Merton's streets clean, does the Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Cleanliness believe that appointing Veolia has been a success?

Reply

While so far the level of street cleansing since Veolia took on the contract has not met our required standard, it is reasonable to say that the full benefits of the service will not be experienced until we have introduced the service changes in October this year. The benefits of a wheeled bin service include the effective containerisation of waste will result in less wind-blown litter and reduced spillage. This enables an alternative approach to resourcing street cleaning and we are confident that this will deliver a higher quality of street cleansing. It should also be borne in mind that this contract continues to deliver significant financial savings, easing the pressure on other key services to find savings.

The number of recorded fly-tips across the borough has increased significantly over the last 18 months. The monitoring of fly tip clearance has indicated that the majority are being cleared within the required 24-hour response period. However, there have been some disappointing instances where this has not been the case. This is being addressed with Veolia. The NCOs are also working closely with the LBM Environmental Enforcement Team to address fly-tipping through communication with

residents, in-depth investigation of fly-tipped material and issuing of enforcement notices.

We will continue to monitor their performance closely and hold them to account for all areas of the service.

From Councillor Billy Christie to Cabinet Member for Finance:

What is the level of vital ongoing support provided by the Council to low income families dealing with the roll out of Universal Credit?

Reply

1 Merton has a Delivery partnership agreement with the DWP to provide Universal Support Delivered Locally. USDL provides:

a. Assisted Digital support

- i. physical access to UC by providing digital access from our Library PCs
- ii. one off advice on how to access the UC portals, make a claim and maintain their UC accounts and tasks – funded by the DWP grant and provided by the Welfare Benefits Team and the Libraries through liaison with Work Coaches and the Jobcentre Plus and self-referrals..
- iii. Ongoing long-term support is also provided by Merton case workers to specific clients as part of their care plans. These tend to be in Direct Payments Team and 14+ Team. Not funded by the DWP.

b. Personal budgeting support

- i. Initial assessment of this is done by the Welfare Benefits team through a triage process.
- ii. Cases requiring more in depth intervention are referred to the CAB for Merton and Lambeth. Merton funds this through the DWP funding.

NOTE: The DWP provide Merton with specified funding to provide the USDL as shown below:

ADS - £8108 for 151 cases

PBS - £16356 for 251 cases

Merton is then paid in addition to this for each case it receives beyond these. This requires Merton to submit quarterly MI stats to DWP.

2 Local Welfare Support Scheme provides advice and assistance in requesting UC advance payments. Where these are not available, instalments of up to 4 weeks can be made whilst UC applicants await their UC payments. This is funded by Merton through the management of the lump sum payment made by DWP in 2013 when crisis loans were abolished.

3 Housing Benefit assist DWP UC staff in working out UC claims where questions arise. This can speed up the assessment of UC.