

## Public Questions to Council 7 July 2021

### 1. From: Malcolm Green

#### To the Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration and the Climate Emergency

Is the Council aware of the strong support in the local community for a Traffic, Congestion and Pollution Reduction scheme to reduce rat-running by non-local through traffic, in the East Hillside neighbourhood of Wimbledon?

#### Reply

The Council is aware of the desire for the East Hillside Low Traffic Neighbourhood / TCPR (similar to that of South Fulham). Officers, local councillors and Cabinet Members have met with residents and understand the support for the project. The Council applauds East Hillside LTN Group for their efforts in securing local support for the scheme and setting out the local issues. At present, due to TFL funding constraints the Council is not yet able to embark on the scheme. We have however committed to installing traffic sensors to gather data to support a funding case in future for the project.

### 2. From: Andrew Boyce

#### To the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children and Education

Given Cllr Stringer's elevated position, will she ensure the S106 works on The Path in South Wimbledon are prioritised in a way that her predecessors never achieved? Will she also apologise on behalf of Cllr Whelton for citing coronavirus as the latest excuse for the Council's inaction over 7.5 years?

#### Reply

The s.106 funded public realm improvements are now being delivered on-site. Works scheduled to be completed by 2nd July. Shortly followed by the planting of the rain garden.

We thank local residents for their input into the design over the past few years, and recognise that the project has taken longer than we anticipated due to a number of unexpected issues, from changes in national guidance that affected the initial design, to most recently the coronavirus pandemic leading to other works e.g. street widening, being urgently prioritised.

#### Supplementary

Thank you Mr Mayor I'd like to thank the cabinet member for her reply. But also to just find out what are the financial implications of the increasing pupils special educational needs and disabilities and what additional funding has the government provided to deal with this increase? Thank you

#### Reply

Thank you for your question and supplementary. The headline is that we've been having a huge increase in numbers and the government's given an increase in the

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expectations of the support that we provide to children and young people and their families with special educational needs, with nowhere near enough additional funding. So this is costing the council millions of pounds every year. It has to come out of our school's budget and therefore effects that funding that we have available for other educational schools. Thank you.

### **3. From: Kevin Clarke**

#### **To the Cabinet Member for Local Environment and Green Spaces**

Please outline plans to manage traffic levels at Garth Rd Recycling Centre as part of movement strategy to reduce pollution and congestion in Merton.

#### **Reply**

The Reuse and

Recycling Centre (HRRC) is operated by Veolia ES. In 2020 early on in the pandemic the site was temporarily closed for a period of six weeks following government guidance on social distancing. Following amended guidance from Government and in line with our neighbouring boroughs within the South London Waste Partnership, the site was reopened to the public on the 13<sup>th</sup> May 2020.

As part of the remobilisation of this element of the service in-line with social distancing guidance, our objectives were to:

- Reopen the HRRC site in a safe and controlled manner
- Ensure social distancing measures are in place to protect staff and customers,
- Ensure measures are in place to safely manage an anticipated increase in demand
- Ensure the Contractor continues to prioritise and maximise recycling wherever possible
- Ensure that reopening the site in no way contradicts any of the key Government advice around restrictions on non-essential travel

Due to the residential location of our facility in Merton, further control measures were required to safely manage the increase in demand and to ensure that all queuing and traffic management issues were retained within the boundary of the operational site to ensure local services operating in the vicinity were not negatively impacted. This includes, neighbouring businesses, Passenger Transport service and the wider waste collection and street cleansing service.

Following the re-opening of the site, there was justified concern that the backlog of residents requiring to use the facility in Garth Road needed to be managed to minimise the level of queuing beyond the site boundary. To achieve this aim, the service introduced a booking system seven days per week which ensured the total number of visitors per day was restricted and evenly spread throughout the week.

Following a regular review of the service provision, we did remove the booking system in Feb 2021 for a brief period. Despite the then existing Government guidance restricting travel for 'essential journeys' only, the Garth Road facility was unable to

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meet the level of demand of users. This demand created significant queuing along Garth Road, with residents queuing up to two hours to access the site. As a consequence, an immediate review was undertaken and the service reintroduced the booking system to address the local concerns.

We are continuing to undertake regular user reviews of the service and are working in partnership with our neighbouring boroughs to ensure the site is operating in line with all Government guidelines and minimise the impact on any long-term restriction whilst addressing the environmental concerns associated with traffic movements.

We will keep this under review and inform the public if and when any further changes are made.

### **4. From: Tim Dare**

#### **To the Cabinet Member for Partnerships, Public Safety and Tackling Crime**

Does the council have any strategy to reduce arson activities around the area near Lavender Park and College Field Business Park? For example, to cooperate with property management companies to increase surveillance and remove existing burnt vehicles?

#### **Reply**

We have spoken with the London Fire Service who have indicated that the location does not feature as one of their repeat locations for deliberate fires, however they have confirmed that they are happy to work with the Safer Merton team to look into the issues at the location and to see how we can work together to resolve them.

College field Business Park has come to note for a separate issue of lorries parking up obstructing roads/pavements and a site visit took place in relation to this in the last few weeks. The Safer Merton Team will be following working with the Management Company in relation to addressing the specific issues identified on the site visit.

We have made the Safer Neighbourhood Team aware of the concerns about arson / burned out vehicles at this location and they will be carrying out patrols in the area and be on the look-out for such activity.

Merton Council's Abandoned vehicles team cooperate with the land owners and managing agents in relation to the removal of abandoned vehicles from their premises (a fee is chargeable for removal of abandoned vehicles from private land ). The team report one vehicle was removed by them from this location in the last year – a caravan which was burned out a few weeks ago.

Moving forward the Safer Merton team will work with the London Fire Service and Police Safer Neighbourhood Team to arrange for a visual fire/crime prevention audit to take place will make recommendations as to any further actions which could be taken help reduce arson and other crime and anti-social behaviour.

In the meantime, if there are further concerns of ASB of this type they can be reported via:

- [www.met.police.uk](http://www.met.police.uk) (Metropolitan Police Online Reporting)

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- Calling 101 (Metropolitan Police Non-Emergency)
- Calling 999 in an emergency for Police or Fire Services.
- Abandoned Vehicles can be reported at [www.merton.gov.uk/streets-parking-transport/abandoned-vehicles](http://www.merton.gov.uk/streets-parking-transport/abandoned-vehicles)

### **5. From: Nicholas Waring**

#### **To the Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration and the Climate Emergency**

Please provide progress reports please as follows:

The Parade, Haydons Road - Street frontage heritage improvements

Ford, 66/67 Plough Lane – unauthorised removal of trees

PlanWimbledon – designation as Neighbourhood Forum

#### **Reply**

##### Haydons Road Parades

Haydon's Road shopfront improvements are part of a rolling programme across Merton. Colliers Wood High Street was completed in 2020, with delays due to Covid.

The Council is now on-site refurbishing Bramcote Parade in Mitcham. Haydon's Road was always intended to be the next project after Bramcote Pde. In 2020, the Council also allocated additional CIL funding to Haydon's Rd Parade to increase the scope of works to include all four blocks of Haydons Road North. Design work will commence late summer 2021.

##### Ford Plough Lane

Latest information is available at:

<https://news.merton.gov.uk/2021/06/11/council-investigating-legal-action-following-plough-lane-felled-trees/>

##### PlanWimbledon

Latest information is available in the Cabinet Reports of 22 June 2021.

(Agenda Item 6)

<https://democracy.merton.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=146&MIId=3972&Ver=4>

### **6. From: Barry Smith**

#### **To the Cabinet Member for Local Environment and Green Spaces**

Veolia frequently leave green rubbish bags on the streets for days, often until they are reported as a fly-tip. Can the council explain why Veolia are not clearing these bags the same day they fill them, and whether they are being paid extra to clear them as fly-tips?

#### **Reply**

The service is aware of the growing concerns with green sweeper sacks being left out overnight.

Our contract does allow for these sacks to be left at roadside but requires street cleansing sacks to be collected at the end of each working day. Where this has not

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been completed, they contractually have 24 hours from notification to rectify this service requirement.

Officers are currently reviewing how this element of the services is monitored with the aim of creating additional reporting functionality for the operational staff to log when and where they have left sacks that will require a collection. This will allow the mobile response crews to efficiently undertake the collection in a timely manner.

In the interim, I would welcome further information on your experience in order to ensure that these areas are rectified and proactively inspected in order to ensure our service provider is delivering on our requirements

Regarding any additional payments made to the service provider for collecting omitted bags on street, I can confirm that no additional expenditure or charge has been incurred by the Council to undertake the collection of green sweeper sacks.

### **7. From: Lee Walker**

#### **To the Cabinet Member for Local Environment and Green Spaces**

During the pandemic, Northcote Road, in Wandsworth borough, was transformed into a fantastic outside space for hospitality venues. What ideas does Merton council have for the creation vibrant outdoor spaces similar to that of Northcote Road?

#### **Reply**

Northcote Road is undoubtedly a popular destination and has a critical mass of hospitality venues to justify the environmental changes made there. Merton Council has also been supporting businesses through the reallocation of highway space to support, in particular, the hospitality sector and safeguard jobs. The Council supported the relocation of Wimbledon Village Farmer's Market onto the High Street in Wimbledon Village with part-time pedestrianisation. The Market is more covid secure in the larger space and has become a popular part of the village experience.

The Council has also approved over 50 licences for tables and chairs on the footway, helping bars and restaurants create extra space and to animate the street-scene. We are also supporting businesses using government grants to create parklets– utilising parking bays for outdoor dining with the introduction of decking and planting to again, add vibrancy to the street scene and support traders. We will be following up the outdoor dining parklets with community parklets in the next phase. Through the use of Neighbourhood CIL, the Council also awarded a grant to LoveWimbledon to improve Hartfield Walk for the existing traders and visitors.

### **8. From: Liza Robbins**

#### **To the Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration and the Climate Emergency**

How do you get in touch with Merton planning and what is the agreed response time? Please advise who will raise this question on my behalf?

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### Reply

Contact details for the Planning Service are published on the Council's planning web pages: <https://www.merton.gov.uk/planning-and-buildings/planning/apply-for-planning-permission> - *Contact Us is found at the bottom of the link*

There are both general enquiries e-mail addresses and an e-mail address for registering a complaint about a possible breach of planning control – planning enforcement.

There are separate e-mail inboxes where someone is proposing to carry out development but seeks pre-application advice and the web page indicates that an acknowledgement is sent within 5 days of the receipt of a valid pre-application submission.

If the Development Control Team receives an e-mail in the “planning” inbox it is either answered the day it comes in or it is passed on to the relevant officer that can answer a query.

Complaints received about possible breaches of planning control are acknowledged by letter as part of the recording process.

The Development Control Team has a planning duty line details of which are published on the Council's planning web pages and an officer is available to take calls each weekday afternoon

### **9. From: Petra Jones**

#### **To the Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration and the Climate Emergency**

What steps will Merton take to ensure the regeneration is funded properly? Will all residents have their removal costs paid for, for example? I would like the councils support to ensure my future is protected. What will you do to support us?

### Reply

The funding and delivery of the Merton Estates Regeneration project is the responsibility of Clarion Housing Group – supported by the Council's strategic planning policies and the planning approvals granted for Eastfields, High Path and Ravensbury Estates.

Clarion's offer to residents is set out on their website and has been directly communicated to residents by Clarion's officers and information packs posted to residents.

Specific questions related to individual personal circumstances should be reported to Clarion. Clarions offer to residents sets out payment details for removal costs – currently £3,000 to cover the cost of moving.

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Further details are online at

<https://www.myclarionhousing.com/my-community/regeneration-projects/merton-london>

Merton Council have also agreed a pledge for residents living in the estate regeneration areas.

### **10. From: Robert Kennedy To the Cabinet Member for Partnerships, Local Environment and Green Spaces**

What consultation process did London Borough of Merton go through in deciding to close part of Church road/turn a large part of Wimbledon park into a car park? Why do council feel this is a good use of very limited public open land during times of social distancing/climate emergency?

### **Reply**

The partial closure of Church Road during this year's Championships has been undertaken with advice from the Metropolitan Police regarding safety and to accommodate the changes to the Championships operations this year including crowding at the gates due to covid restrictions.

The AELTC engaged with over 600 local residents prior to the Council undertaking the Traffic Management Order for the closures. As the scheme is experimental, the Council's consultation is live and we encourage residents to feed back what the experience of the closure was; to inform whether the scheme is repeated or amended for future years.

[www.merton.gov.uk/restrictions-wimbledon-2021](http://www.merton.gov.uk/restrictions-wimbledon-2021)

The Council has a long standing legal agreement with the AELTC to support this world renowned event. This is principally to support the queuing and some limited car parking. This year the space requirements have been reduced but the requirement for car parking has remained and has been provided. We will continue to work hard with the AELTC to ensure sustainable transport solutions are promoted.

### **Supplementary**

Evening in relation to my question about the Wimbledon Tennis Championships and Wimbledon car parking and the closure of Church Road. I asked about consultations, you said that the All England Lawn Tennis club engaged with over 600 local residents prior to Council undertaking traffic management order to the closures. You will be aware there's an uproar amongst the community. My question is, are you saying that the All England Lawn Tennis club consultation counts as a London Borough of Merton consultation? Which is what my question was about and how were these 600 local residents selected from a much bigger population? Why did not

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the All England Lawn Tennis Club or London borough of Merton consult with the chairs of the local resident's association and Chair of friends of Wimbledon Park?  
Thank you

### **Reply**

I thank him for his supplementary answer, clearly they did consult with the 600 people. This is the first year that closure has taken place. I believe it was right that closure to have happened on Church Road in terms of making it a better space for pedestrians and cyclists. But clearly going forward I think like any closure we will look at that for next year and make the necessary changes if needs be. Thank you.

### **11. From: Peter Cameron**

#### **To the Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration and the Climate Emergency**

In 2019 Merton Council allocated money under the Neighbourhood Fund scheme to Haydon's Road parade for refurbishment improvements. What happened to this allocation, where is the money and when does the work commence?

### **Reply**

#### Haydons Road Parades

Haydon's Road shopfront improvements are part of a rolling programme across Merton. Colliers Wood High Street was completed in 2020, with delays due to Covid. The Council is now on-site refurbishing Bramcote Parade in Mitcham.

Haydon's Road was always intended to be the next project after Bramcote Parade. In 2020, the Council also allocated additional CIL funding to Haydon's Rd Parade to increase the scope of works to include all four blocks of Haydons Road North. Design work will commence late summer 2021.

### **12. From: Emma Maddison**

#### **To the Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration and the Climate Emergency**

Please could you summarise the housing enforcement action taken by the council against any housing association since 2010?

### **Reply**

Housing Associations have standard procedures to follow if their Landlord Does not carry out repairs and the Council expects them to fulfil their repairing obligations in accordance with their statutory repairing obligations ( Landlord and Tenant Act 1985) and their tenants conditions of tenancy . Where a housing association tenant raises issues of disrepair with the Councils Housing Enforcement team then the tenant is advised to contact their Landlord in the first instance to exhaust the housing associations complaints system and where necessary raise the complaint with the Housing Ombudsman. In instances where the repair remains outstanding the Councils housing enforcement team will raise the matter with the housing association to seek a solution, which could be by way of informal action which is usually sufficient to resolve the matter.



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### **Supplementary**

Less of a question than more of a clarification, do I understand the answer to my question means that the council has never taken formal enforcement action against any housing association.

### **Reply**

I would like to thank Emma Madison for her supplementary question in terms of enforcement action clearly there's obviously the social housing regulator. If there is a complaint made about any terms of Housing conditions, it will be fully again investigated by environmental health officers. I don't know whether any has been taken in the past but clearly if there are things that do breach the Housing law they will be investigated in response given. Thank you.

### **13. From: Dolores Llatas Beltrán To the Cabinet Member for Local Environment and Green Spaces**

Could the Council confirm the quantity and frequency of the watering of new street trees that the contractor is paid to do and also the number of years they are paid to do it?

### **Reply**

Merton Council's Greenspaces tree works contractor is undertaking the watering of Merton's young tree plantings. They have confirmed, as of their email 25/6/21 the following information;

- There are seven geographical areas across the borough where young trees are being watered. These geographical areas are within Mitcham that is split into three areas; the Morden area, which includes New Malden; and the Wimbledon area that has two distinct areas.
- Across the areas outlined above, the service is currently watering approximately 650 young new trees that have been planted.
- All of the above trees have now been watered four times, commencing from the 2<sup>nd</sup> - 3<sup>rd</sup> week of May.

In relation to the number of years the contractor is paid to undertake this work, I can confirm that young trees from planting seasons 2018-19, 2019-20 & 2020-21 are the stock being watered. Those from planting seasons pre-dating the earliest here are now deemed to be established & not watered by our contractor. We undertake a strategic view on watering and, dependent on the seasonality of weather conditions, will support trees through watering until they are established. This can vary due to localised conditions, site placement and the species of the tree.

### **14. From: Andrea Milde To the Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration and the Climate Emergency**

Regarding front gardens, a) Why does Merton Council allow front gardens to be paved given how important green front gardens are to biodiversity and wildlife, b)

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What sanctions does Merton Council apply to front gardens paved without permission, c) How many times have sanctions been applied in the last year?

### Reply

The Council's Highway guidance for applying for dropped-kerbs includes advice on minimising the amount of hard-standing in front gardens and to minimise surface water run-off. Paving over of garden amenity is controlled by planning, where an area greater than 5 square metres is to be hard paved planning permission must be applied for. If the area is paved with porous materials then the water is retained within the garden footprint or if surface water runoff is channelled into a soakaway within the property then the water is retained within property. This would satisfy the Planning requirement.

The council has limited planning control over this as in most cases people are allowed to lay hardstanding over their front garden without the need for planning permission under the General Permitted Development Order 2015 (as amended).

Class F – hard surfaces This provides permitted development rights within the curtilage of a house for - (a) the provision of a hard surface for any purpose incidental to the enjoyment of the dwellinghouse as such or (b) the replacement in whole or in part of such a surface F.1 Development is not permitted by Class F if permission to use the dwellinghouse as a dwellinghouse has been granted only by virtue of Class M, N, P, PA, or Q of Part 3 of this Schedule (change of use) Conditions F.2 Development is permitted by Class F subject to the condition that where - (a) the hard surface would be situated on land between a wall forming the principal elevation of the dwellinghouse and a highway, and (b) the area of ground covered by the hard surface, or the area of hard surface replaced, would exceed 5 square metres, either the hard surface shall be made of porous materials, or provision shall be made to direct run-off water from the hard surface to a permeable or porous area or surface within the curtilage of the dwellinghouse The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government has produced separate guidance on permeable paving. This can be found at:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/7728/paving\\_frontgardens.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/7728/paving_frontgardens.pdf)

We take action against unauthorised crossovers in placing bollards across the kerblines. It has not been possible to calculate the volume in the time permitted. As can be seen from the above detail the case for planning enforcement is limited and we have no evidence of enforcement action being required or taken.

**15. From: Sharon Belaidi**

**To the Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration and the Climate Emergency**

Lots of front gardens are now concrete drives- why can't LBM stipulate a couple of feet MUST remain environmentally friendly before applications for a dropped kerb

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are granted? Please make every street tree/trees in parks a T.P.O. (I worry about the few trees in playing fields adjoining David Lloyd, SW20)

### **Reply**

All vehicle crossover applications are provided with links to the guidance available for constructing Hard Standings and advised to contact planning to ensure designs are compliant. Crossover applications are only required to obtain planning through the application process when they are on a Classified Road, in a Conservation Area or are either a flat or maisonette. Applicants are reminded of their responsibility to ensure the Hard Standing complies with planning.

**16. From: Matthew Willis**

**To the Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration and the Climate Emergency**

What **action** did the council take in response to the condition of Eastfields estate housing **before** 1st of June 2021?

### **Reply**

The circumstances where the Council has control over any housing association is limited, it is the social housing regulator which has the overall powers relating to the regulation of the housing association sector. The ability of the Council to interfere with housing association business is limited to its statutory duties which includes the enforcement of the Housing Act 2004 and associated legislation. Where any housing association tenant living in Merton raises issues of disrepair with officers and / or ward councillors these are dealt with either through case work, liaison with the Housing Association (including the Clarion Housing Group) and regular performance review meetings led by the Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration and the Climate Emergency.

**17. From: Eve Cohen**

**To the Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration and the Climate Emergency**

Applications for tree works provide insufficient information to enable residents to be aware, or for officers to assess applications. Location of the tree on site (with plan), the work proposed and the reason for it should be included. Why are applications not deemed invalid until adequate information is provided?

### **Reply**

Thank you for your question and I agree it would be good if this was provided, however, we cannot require it but will look at how we can improve the information provided in future. There are 2 main forms of 'applications'. The first relates to conservation areas and is a section 211 notice. That gives the local planning authority 6 weeks notice of an intention to carry out tree work. It does not require the submission of a tree works application form or any reasons for the tree work. All that is required is sufficient information to identify the tree, and the tree work to be carried out. It is up to the notifier to decide whether a plan would help their notice.

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The second form relates to works to trees covered by tree preservation orders. This does require the submission of a tree works application form, and the reasons for the tree work. Sufficient information must be provided to identify the tree and its location. Again, a plan may not be necessary, but is frequently provided by an applicant.

When registering either form of submission, the description will aim to describe the location of the tree and what work is proposed. Occasionally, notifications/applications will remain invalid until the admin person is satisfied that the correct amount of information is provided. The tree officers can also ask for additional information if it is considered the application, once registered, appears to be unclear, or requires clarification. In the case of tree preservation orders, an application for tree work can be refused consent if it becomes apparent that the application is unsatisfactory in a significant way.

**18. From: Dr Simon Jones**

**To the Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration and the Climate Emergency**

Will Merton Council publish the full transfer agreement covering the transfer of its housing stock to Clarion in 2010?

### Reply

The Agreement is subject to a confidentiality clause which protects sensitive personal data and commercially sensitive information contained within the document and any ancillary agreements. Any proposals relating to the publishing of a full agreement will need to be first approved and agreed with Clarion and not be in breach of the provisions of the Agreement but subject to those caveats we can provide the agreement.

### Supplementary

The answer given to my question indicates that Clarions agreement must be sought to publish the transfer agreement under which council housing stock was transferred to clarion in 2010. I wish to ask will the council seek Clarions agreement to publish the transfer agreement redacted as necessary to protect sensitive personal information and report back on their response at the next full council meeting or one of the appropriate subcommittee meetings?

### Reply

I would like to thank Mr. Jones for his supplementary question. In terms of the transfer agreement and this council has no problem publishing, subject to the caveat in terms of confidentiality/ Anyone is entitled to put in an FOI to request that agreement and clearly obviously that will be considered at Council. Obviously we would have to talk to Clarion in terms of any things that would have to be redacted. This Council is for transparency I think if people want to see the transfer agreement they should be able to. Thank you.

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### 19. From: Tony Burton

#### To the Cabinet Member for Local Environment and Green Spaces

When in 2021 will Council fulfil the commitments made by Cabinet on 9/11/20 to:

- Publication -consultation draft Green Spaces Strategy
- Publication- consultation draft Tree Strategy
- improved reporting- idverde's contract performance
- introduction- one stop web based reporting for the public
- quarterly written updates - Green Spaces officers to the Scrutiny Panel

### Reply

Officers have been working on these various recommendations to the service as agreed by Cabinet. It should be noted that current progress has been delayed over the last several months due to multiple restrictions in place and the service focus on delivering front-line services during the Pandemic. This has not diluted the ambitions of the service to progress with the commitments but has required the service to prioritise these in line with the resource capacity in the service.

The tree strategy is currently being commissioned and there will substantial consultation integrated into the workplan to deliver this strategy. Following the completion of this integral strategy, the service will focus on the delivery of the green spaces strategy, which shall be informed by the Council's climate commitment.

The implementation of systems to create enhanced reporting for stakeholders and residents has commenced. The process for the creation of integrated IT systems will naturally require development time, but it is anticipated that by the end of the calendar year a new enhanced system will be available, if not sooner.

Improved reporting for the *idverde* grounds maintenance contract has commenced and revised business procedures are in place to improve operational awareness of the services delivered. The improved reporting will include the tabling of the *Annual Review* at the Sustainable Communities Overview & Scrutiny Panel, which will be followed by regular interval highlight reporting to the *Panel*.

### 20. From: Deborah Crosby

#### To the Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration and the Climate Emergency

Love Wimbledon will soon apply to be the Town Centre BID 2022-2027. Regarding the voting process:

- Do residents vote?
- Do landowners (as opposed to business tenants) get a vote?
- Does each business only get one vote, irrespective of size?
- How many businesses/landowners are eligible to vote?

### Reply

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- Do residents vote? – **No**
- Do landowners (as opposed to business tenants) get a vote? – **No**
- Does each business only get one vote, irrespective of size? - **Those eligible to vote in the ballot will be those non-domestic ratepayers listed on Merton Council’s database for each hereditament (business premises) situated in the geographical area of the proposed BID at the date of the Notice. The business must have a rateable value of over £20,000. Each person/business entitled to vote has one vote for each hereditament occupied or (if unoccupied) owned by him or her in the geographical area of the proposed BID. Some ratepayers may receive more than one vote if they have more than one property**
- How many businesses/landowners are eligible to vote? – **the current voters list contains 458 hereditaments**

### 21. From: Regina Denton

#### To the Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration and the Climate Emergency

What was the age profile of responses received in the consultation for Stage 2a of the Local Plan and how does this compare to the age profile of Merton?

#### Reply

Of the people who responded to the local plan question on age profile, the table below sets out the comparison

Stage2a	Under 18	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
%	1%	1%	10%	26%	22%	19%	21%
Merton	Under 18	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
%	24%	6%	14%	17%	14%	11%	13%

### 22. From: Richard Poole

#### To the Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration and the Climate Emergency

Please can you summarise the legal relationship between Merton Council & Clarion (including its subsidiaries)

#### Reply

In 22 March 2010, the Council transferred its housing stock to Merton Priory Homes following a successful ballot of the tenants, as required by the relevant legislation.

The interests of MPH transferred to Circle 33 which has since become part of the Clarion Housing group. Clarion are a separate legal entity from the Council. The agreement under which the transfer of stock took place set out the terms upon which that transfer took place. Apart from as provided for in that transfer agreement and other related documents, there is no ongoing legal relationship between the Council and Clarion, beyond that which the Council has with other registered providers or landowners in the borough.

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### **23. From: Mark Morgan To the Cabinet Member for Finance**

What is Merton Council's policy for the handling of the absence of response / silence from potential respondents in the assessment of the support or opposition to matters the Council runs a consultation about?

#### **Reply**

For most consultations we would ask for information from respondents about their demographics to help us understand how representative those responses are. We would also look to understand who the key stakeholders are in order to understand if those most likely to be impacted by a decision have responded to the consultation. When the results of the consultation are reported to decision makers this would include a description of who has responded to the consultation for the decision makers to give due consideration to.

### **24. From: Augustin Bataille To the Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration and the Climate Emergency**

What conversations has Future Merton had with Love Wimbledon on a potential business-led neighbourhood forum for the Wimbledon CBD?

#### **Reply**

There have been no specific conversations between FutureMerton and LoveWimbledon about the creation of a business-led Neighbourhood Forum.

### **25. From: Joseph Hackett To the Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration and the Climate Emergency**

In the last Town Centre BID process in 2016, (a) How many businesses were eligible to vote, and (b) How many businesses cast a vote?

#### **Reply**

- (a) How many businesses were eligible to vote – **the voters list contained 450 hereditaments**  
(b) How many businesses cast a vote? – **270 (a turnout of 60%)**

### **26. From: Suzanne Grocott To the Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration and the Climate Emergency**

Clause 4.35 of the “LBM Neighbourhood CIL Report (interim) Spring 2021” states that Merton is expecting over £40 million in CIL over the next 10 years. Please would the Cabinet Member provide a breakdown of this forecast of £40m by key projects and ward.

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### Reply

The Question is referring to paragraph 4.35 of the [interim review report \(Appendix 1 to item 8 on the 22 June Cabinet agenda – Neighbourhood CIL Review\)](#) which discusses future demands of large strategic development and estimates the amount of CIL income that could be generated from the developments to meet those demands. The key developments and estimated CIL arising is listed below. The figures are estimates for each project given they are yet to have reached the stage when a liability under the CIL Regulations can be calculated more precisely. The wards within which the developments are located are also listed however it should be noted that due to the strategic nature and large scale of developments the demands for investment will stretch beyond the individual wards and the borough boundary.

- Estate regeneration - £25 to £30 million (Abbey, Ravensbury, Figges Marsh)
- Morden Town Centre - £10 to £20 million (Merton Park, Cannon Hill, Ravensbury, St Helier)
- Benedict's Wharf - £5 to £10 million (Cricket Green)

It is noted that the Government's Planning White Paper in 2020 proposed the replacement of CIL with a new Infrastructure Levy which subject to the details that Government take forward may result in less money becoming available for the types of projects that can be funded by CIL. Proposals include requiring the new levy funding to cover affordable housing that currently is delivered directly by developers under S106 agreements would contribute to this reduction in funding.

### Supplementary

Thank you, so I noted in the response given to my question the proposals for the new infrastructure levy would be to cover affordable housing. I would like to ask, would the Cabinet member agree that having funds directed specifically to affordable housing would help the Council reach its own targets, that's something failing to do.

### Reply

Thank you Suzanne for your supplementary answer. In terms of seal money and affordable housing, the Council welcomes any money that is available for affordable housing. But it is part of a planning bill and we have major concerns about that because it will be the loss of Democratic input. But also in terms of planning across Merton as a whole. We are aware it will bring extra additional income in to the Council, it is something that was introduced by the Labour Council. That has to be balanced alongside infrastructure needs here in Merton. Thank you.

#### **27. From: Rob Cowan**

#### **To the Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration and the Climate Emergency**

What is the target for new housing to be built in Wimbledon over the next five years, and how much of it would be in the town centre?



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### Reply

Whilst not a target, over the next 5 years there are 1,500 new homes identified in the housing trajectory for the Wimbledon neighbourhood (Hillside ward, Trinity ward, Wimbledon Park ward, Village ward, and the eastern half of Dundonald ward). 230 of these homes are within the Wimbledon town centre boundary, 141 of which are the new YMCA. This includes the Wimbledon stadium where over 800 homes are currently under construction

**28. From: Lynne Gordon  
To the Cabinet Member for Local Environment and Green Spaces**

When was the latest consultation undertaken with businesses from (i) the Town Centre CBD; (ii) Weir Road Industrial Estate; and (iii) Plough Lane Business Park about waste matters? How many businesses were reached out to and what was the number of responses?

### Reply

Waste services supported, by our Environmental Enforcement team, regularly liaise with and work in partnership with our Town Centre BIDs, Industrial Estates and Business Parks on environmental matters, focused on street cleansing and fly tipping.

With regard to waste collection, there is no requirement to undertake formal consultation with businesses. Although the Council is required to provide a commercial waste collection service it is up to the individual business to make their own commercial waste arrangements within statutory requirements. As such there is no duty to consult on waste matters, per se, and it is not usual to consult on this type of service. That said regular stakeholder forums with these areas are undertaken and regular checks are made to ensure all business have appropriate waste arrangements in place. Failure to comply may and has resulted in prosecution.

**29. From: Susan Hale  
To the Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration and the Climate Emergency**

Why has a decision on the Hartfield Walk planning application not been made yet?

### Reply

The planning application at Hartfield Walk has not yet been determined as the application has to go before the Planning Applications Committee due to the number of representations received. The Case Officer is currently awaiting plans of the archway to form part of the application. Once officers have received these plans then a committee date can be looked at.

**30. From: Nicola Thompson  
To the Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration and the Climate  
Emergency**

## **Public Questions to Council 7 July 2021**

Following an accident involving an HGV and a cyclist at the Durnsford/Gap Road junction on 6/08/20 a Merton Council spokesman promised "a safety audit of the junction for pedestrians and cyclists". What are the conclusions of this safety audit and how will this dangerous junction be improved?

### **Reply**

On 6<sup>th</sup> August at about 07:26 hours, an HGV was travelling east in Gap Road. The HGV was held at a red light at the signal controlled junction with Plough Lane/Durnsford Road. A cyclist also travelling east in Gap Road, cycled along the nearside of the HGV. The signals changed and the HGV started turning left into Durnsford Road, colliding with the cyclist. A contributory factor as listed by the Police is that the cyclist misjudged the vehicles path or speed and the police concluded that no further investigation would be carried out. This also means that the police do not consider the road layout to be unsafe.

Council officers committed to undertake a safety audit which would normally be part of the Council's road safety funding from TFL. In March 2020, TFL suspended normal funding for due to their financial pressures with covid-19. We had expected this funding to be reinstated this financial year, but this has not been the case. Once funding becomes available a safety audit will be considered whilst being mindful of other service critical priorities.

### **31. From: Alan Maries To the Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration and the Climate Emergency**

In the consultation for Stage 2a of Merton's Local Plan how many businesses responded from:

1. Wimbledon Town Centre BID;
2. Weir Road Industrial Estate;
3. Plough Lane Business Park?

### **Reply**

In the consultation for Stage 2a of Merton's Local Plan businesses responses were:

1. Wimbledon Town Centre BID; 6
2. Weir Road Industrial Estate; - 0
3. Plough Lane Business Park - 0

It should be noted that the Council is also engaged with businesses and landowners in these areas through the pre-app planning process and planning applications process for major developments, as well as the preparation of the Future Wimbledon SPD which had a landowner forum and business representation.

### **Supplementary**

Sorry I know that they were only six responses to the consultation on stage two of Merton's local plan, from over 400 business premises in Wimbledon town centre. There were no responses at all from the Weir Road and Plough Lane commercial

## Public Questions to Council 7 July 2021

areas. My question is, if this low level of response is considered acceptable for consultation, on the important local plan. Could the cabinet member please explain why has a much higher hurdle being set, for the recent consultation on the neighbourhood forum?

### Reply

I would like to thank Mr Marie's for his supplementary answer. I think we will be obviously discussing the neighbourhood plan later this evening at council. One of the concerns is that the Business Improvement District love Wimbledon, represents all businesses within the Wimbledon town centre. They have been voted in, in terms of being that representative body and there does need to be a synergy between business and residents for neighbourhood. That hasn't been reached yet but as I will say I hope that going forward in the future that that will be achieved. Thank you

### **32. From: Susie Hicks To the Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration and the Climate Emergency**

What discussions has the cabinet member had with either of the two borough MPs on housing repair issues prior to 1st June 2021?

### Reply

As cabinet member I can provide assurances that where necessary and appropriate I have and will continue to do so, raise issues with the 2 borough MP'S regarding housing repair issues affecting their constituencies. It is the case however, that many such cases are already known to the relevant MP through their own surgeries and their tireless engagement with their local community.

### **33. From: Robin Vaughan-Williams To the Cabinet Member for Local Environment and Green Spaces**

What steps is the council taking to encourage local residents and business follow the example shown by Merton Garden Streets? How are people being made aware of different opportunities and how to get involved? What means, including social media and more traditional methods, are being used?

### Reply

As part of Merton's Climate Change Campaign, which is running throughout 2021, in March Merton Council set out a number of actions that individuals and businesses can take to help green Merton. Please see the pledge page [here](#) for more details.

Merton Council has also promoted the Merton Garden Streets initiative via our Climate Action Newsletter which is circulated to over 2,500 people (please see bulletins [here](#) and [here](#) for more details) and via our Twitter account.

The Merton Garden Streets initiative is also promoted by Merton's Climate Action Group on the Merton Garden Streets [website](#) and the Merton Climate Action Group Twitter account.

### **34. From: Tim Day**

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### To the Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration and the Climate Emergency

Is Merton Council supportive of Neighbourhood Planning?

#### Reply

Merton Council is supportive of Neighbourhood Planning and most recently officers have been working constructively in supporting Plan Wimbledon's recent consultation.

#### **35. From: John Boyd**

### To the Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration and the Climate Emergency

Many approved planning applications involve a loss of natural habitat for birds and small wild animals. An example would be a new house or houses approved in the garden of an existing house when hedges, grassed areas and flower beds might be lost.

Is this environmental loss routinely documented?

#### Reply

The Council does not undertake any regular monitoring on environmental loss in the borough from planning applications. Planning officers would however note that The National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 170(d) requires planning decisions to provide net gains for biodiversity and the London Plan Policy G6(D) states that development proposals should aim to secure net biodiversity gain. Adopted Council planning policy CS13 requires, where appropriate, development to integrate new or enhanced habitat or design and landscaping which encourages biodiversity and where possible avoid causing ecological damage. Developers must propose full mitigation and compensation measures for any ecological damage that is caused.

The question is couched in terms of a presumption of "environmental loss".

However, the Council's planning officers routinely require applications, ranging from small to large sites, to provide information to assess their biodiversity value, in order to assess whether there is a loss of biodiversity and will make planning approval conditional upon mitigating the impact of the development requiring for example the planting of native trees, encouraging initiatives such as green roofs on buildings, requiring bat and badger surveys to be undertaken, and providing guidance so as to avoid demolition activity that might impact on birds during the nesting season.

Officers are able to use Greenspace Information for Greater London (GiGL) to supplement any information received on applications and which provides a range of information on the natural environment. [Greenspace Information for Greater London – the capital's environmental records centre \(gigl.org.uk\)](http://gigl.org.uk)