

COUNCIL MEETING
2 February 2011

SECOND SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA

Agenda Item 5 – Questions from the Public

The questions and answers are circulated around the chamber.

Agenda Item 6 – Questions from Councillors

The questions and answers are circulated around the chamber.

Agenda Item 17 – Strategic Objective Review – Sustainable Communities – Culture and Sport

The questions and answers relating to the Strategic Objective are circulated around the chamber.

Strategic Objective Motion 1 (Labour)

Submitted by Councillors Martin Whelton, Maxi Martin and Stephen Alambritis

This Council acknowledges the importance of sport to the well being of Merton residents. In particular, this Council notes the importance of football to the social, cultural and sporting life of this country.

In addition to the sporting impact, football teams can help to regenerate areas of social and economic deprivation. Football teams can have a huge impact on health and wellbeing through job creation and investment in youth teams and in other local community programmes.

Merton currently has one semi-professional football team within its boundary – Tooting and Mitcham United FC. The club is an important part of the football legacy of Merton but it is in its contribution to the local community that it is most notable. Tooting and Mitcham have created a sustainable, multi-activity environment within an area of social, sport and health deprivation at the Hub. This community sports facility is a centre of excellence for sport, leisure and health. The hub involves the whole community - regardless of background or fitness level - in a healthy, fun and active lifestyle.

This council resolves to continue to work with Tooting and Mitcham football club to maximise the benefits the club can bring to the local community.

This council also acknowledges the borough's long association with Wimbledon football club. The Wimbledon patrimony was returned to its spiritual home in Merton in 2007 and it remains on show in Morden library. However, AFC Wimbledon, the inheritors of the Wimbledon mantle, remain in exile in Kingston. Despite not having a stadium of their own, AFC, a club

owned by its fans, have gone from strength to strength and are a credit to the huge community effort behind the club. This council congratulates the club on its excellent performance to date and on its continued role in working with the local community through the Dons Trust and the club's youth academy, which works closely with Merton College.

This council also notes the Leader of the Council recently appeared in the AFC v Southport match day programme, pledging his support for the club returning to Merton.

This council believes it is time for AFC to return home and, in order to maximise the health and wellbeing of local people and to build on our historic footballing legacy, this council agrees to do everything in its power to facilitate AFC Wimbledon in returning to the borough of Merton.

Strategic Objective Motion 2 (Conservative)

Submitted by Councillors Samantha George, Janice Howard, Maurice Groves and Diane Neil Mills

This Council believes that access to sport and culture plays an important role in providing a good quality of life for Merton residents and therefore supports increasing participation in sports across the borough.

This Council recognises the valuable work undertaken in Merton by AFC Wimbledon to promote sport at grassroots level and affirms its continuing support for the principle of AFC Wimbledon finding a permanent base in the borough, its spiritual home.

The Council believes that the advantages conferred by such a move would include:

- A further increase in sports being played locally;
- A swelling of civic pride;
- The ability to make the most of the current community involvement with AFC Wimbledon;
- The potential to help the regeneration of the area;
- The opportunity to bring additional business and income into Merton; and
- The increase of the profile of the borough.

This Council therefore resolves to work closely with AFC Wimbledon and its supporters in pursuit of the club's return to its roots here in Merton.