

Merton Council

Council

10 September 2014

Supplementary agenda

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Agenda Item 5

Council 10 September 2014

**Public questions
Procedure**

The Mayor will call your name and ask if you have a supplementary question arising from the answer you have received.

If you do not have a supplementary question then simply respond thank you, no. If you do have a supplementary question respond thank you, yes. You will be shown to a seat in the chamber where you will ask your supplementary question. Make sure you use the microphone.

Having put your question, please be seated whilst the Cabinet member responds. Once the response has been given, please return to your seat in the public gallery. The questions and answers and all supplementary questions and replies will be published on Merton's website after the meeting.

**1) From Jacqueline Heys Robinson
To the Cabinet Member for Environmental Sustainability and Regeneration**

Has the Council considered that proposals to demolish and regenerate High Path, Eastfields and Ravensbury estates would give rise to serious difficulties? Included are disruptive building works, severe congestion on roads and underground, loss of privacy, and further strain on electrical wiring and plumbing.

Reply

In response to Circle Housing Merton Priory Homes proposals to explore the regeneration of these three estates, the council has committed to working with residents, to ensure their voices are heard and their needs are met throughout the consultation process. The council has convinced Circle Housing Merton Priory Homes to jointly sign up to a list of 10 key commitments which will keep residents at the heart of these proposals. In recognition of concerns about disruption, should regeneration go ahead, one of these commitments is that Circle Merton Priory Homes will keep disruption to a minimum and provide extra help to those who most need it. The council is also preparing an Estates Local Plan to explore the investment in these estates so that we can fully understand all the issues presented by this project and that any redevelopment would be bound by planning rules to maximise benefits and minimise disruption as far as possible.

Supplementary:

I would like to enquire as a result of a survey I made in July, is the council aware that the sample taken of the survey, showed that 10 out of 12 residents were not in favour. I have no reason to believe that the other closes, Priory, Beckett and adjoining close have any different view to this. Could the council explore alternative solutions to meeting the housing criteria without the need to demolish this particular area? The claims of poor building and poor condition are questionable. Also the loss of numbers of rooms for some residents will have a detrimental effect. Would the council take due consideration all these concerns?

Response:

The answer is that we want to hear all the voices of residents of the three estates concerned and take fully into account their views on every aspect of the scheme proposals as it is developed next year. Obviously the council itself is not running the housing, it's being transferred to Circle Housing Merton Priory Homes, so before we agree to their proposals next year, and without saying now whether we are going to agree to them or not, we want to see the full detail of what is proposed on each of these three estates. We want to hear those voices of individual residents, of residents by tenure, of residents by block, of residents by estate, so that we councillors can act as champions for those residents and their interests.

**2) From Me Wei Li Hur
To the Cabinet Member for Environmental Sustainability and Regeneration**

I would like to know when cashless parking is going to be implemented. I see the last update was in March 2014, in which council stated cashless parking would be implemented "by the summer".

Reply

To be answered by the Cabinet Member for Environmental Cleanliness and Parking

The date for implementation of cashless parking is the end of Sept (30th). The first phase (council car parks) will be introduced to all council managed car parks. Dependant upon the successful implementation of the first phase then cashless parking will be rolled out to all of the on street pay and display locations.

Background information

Once the first 2 rollouts have been completed we will introduce virtual permits. No date has been agreed for this but a more detailed timetable is to follow.

Rationale for this approach

As with any changes such as this which relies on data transfer over the airways, implementation should be carried out in a phased way so that any problems encountered can be resolved before moving onto the next phase.

**3) From Paula Shapland
To the Cabinet Member for Environmental Sustainability and Regeneration**

Is there anything that can be done about the dangerous pedestrian crossing point at the entrance to Lidl car park in Morden? Many children and elderly get caught out half way across being narrowly missed by cars. My daughter was clipped and knocked off her scooter. There is a blind spot when cars turn in (often at speed) also very little walk way space on the entry side making it difficult to get out of the way of oncoming vehicles quickly.

Reply

The zebra crossing was improved approximately 4 years ago. Although this incident is extremely unfortunate, the zebra crossing is not considered to be unsafe. The zebra crossing is fully visible and sightlines from both pedestrians' and motorists' point of view are also unrestricted from every direction.

According to recorded personal injury accident records there have been no accidents at this location. Additionally, given the junction and access points officers do not believe that speed is an issue.

Regrettably, however, there are those few drivers who may not pay attention to their surroundings and incidences caused by poor driver behaviour or lack of concentration cannot be addressed through engineering measures.

**4) From Anthony Fairclough
To the Cabinet Member for Environmental Cleanliness and Parking**

Will the Cabinet Member ensure that details of how to subscribe to the garden waste collection scheme by cheque are published online and in the leaflet, and consider online booking? All that's advertised is subscription by phone, and I'm always held in queue – and don't have time to wait.

Reply

We try to encourage residents to pay for their garden waste collections service by direct debit as it is an on-going service and the administrative processes are much smoother than if a customer pays by cheque. The service is fortnightly therefore it is necessary to speak to the contact centre to ensure the correct day and week of collection is booked.

We are currently awaiting a new system to be implemented (approximately April 2015) but consideration needs to be given to the complexity of the collection service before committing to operating an online booking service.

**5) From Paul Carter
To the Cabinet Member for Environmental Cleanliness and Parking**

At the Council meeting, 9/7/2014 we were advised that you were working "particularly hard" towards gating access to the land off the footpath running 33-49 Langdale Avenue to Commonsidge West to prevent further fly-tipping. There has since been further fly-tipping. When will the gates be in place and the rubbish removed?

Reply

The alley gate scheme is a decision for local residents who can actively participate in preventing crime in their area by agreeing to restrict access to private alleyways by installing alley gates. There had been previous attempts to gate this area but due to an objection the scheme did not proceed.

The council's Enforcement Manager sent out consultation letters to all properties that have access to the alleyway at the rear of 33-49 Langdale Ave, Mitcham asking residents if they would be prepared to consent to alley gates to this alleyway/land. To date 8 consent forms have been returned but yet again an objection has been raised by one of the businesses. Further reminder letters and communication with the objector will take place and we will endeavour to complete this scheme as soon as possible.

I am pleased to add that the post of alley gate coordinator has recently been recruited to after the departure of the previous postholder. A new member of staff

will take over this role from 15th September and will be able to assist in focusing resources on this issue.

Supplementary:

If all those contacted say yes, and one objector continued to say no, does that mean that the gating scheme would not go ahead or would it be a democratic decision bound to the feelings of the majority?

Response:

I don't actually know the answer to that. At the end of the day this has been going on for so long, I want to see it cleared up as much as you do. The most important thing is that we can apply the law, we can't break it, so we have to make sure we conform to the law as it is and we know it is on private land. I hope that means we can move forward on this, we need apparently 95%. I want the area gated just as much as you do because I am aware of what is happening. Thank you for coming along this evening.

**6) From Kathy King
To the Cabinet Member for Environmental Sustainability and Regeneration**

I first heard of the Fifteen Year Improvement Plan for Morden six years ago but can't see any evidence of improvement. How far into this 15 year plan is the Council? When might we expect to see strong evidence of improvements in the town centre?

Reply

The transformation of Morden town centre is a main priority for the Council's regeneration team. Something as complex as the redevelopment of the whole town centre cannot be achieved overnight, particularly as we are reliant on the active cooperation of Transport for London as a major landowner and transport operator at the heart of the centre.

Since the positive feedback from local people towards improving and regenerating Morden, the council has been undertaking a lot of work to make this happen, such as:

- 2011 Brought this vision for Morden into the council's planning policies, which means that it can be considered in deciding planning applications for the area
- 2012 Worked with Transport for London (one of the major landowners in the area and the owner of prominent site at Morden Station) to persuade them of the value of redeveloping their site and the local support for it
- 2013 Consulted on proposals for a redeveloped Morden station
- 2014 Adopted Morden Station planning brief which will guide development on this site.

Other on-going improvements during this time include the removal of unsightly guard rails, cleaning the council's own buildings in Morden,

For the future the council is working with the landowner, Transport for London, to encourage them to redevelop their site in line with the adopted Morden station planning brief, providing a new leisure pool facility at Morden Park Pool and continuing to work with shop owners and other high street businesses. We are currently identifying funding opportunities to kick start physical regeneration of Morden including ambitious plans to radically improve London Road and create new public spaces at the heart of Morden.

**7) From Shaketa Welch
To the Cabinet Member for Finance**

With regards to unemployment, why doesn't Merton be the first to encourage employment by recruiting residents to work in some council departments?

Reply

The Council has a good record of employing local people, with 46% of the workforce currently comprising borough residents.

The Council also seeks to employ local young people through apprenticeships and gives first priority to those that are Merton residents in order to seek to ensure young Merton residents gain opportunities for work and education. The Council specifically allocates apprentice places to looked after children to seek to support some of our most vulnerable young people in to training and employment.

Additionally, the Council holds an annual week "work taster" event that aims to provide work experience for disabled people who are borough residents seeking to provide them with improved opportunity to gain experience of work to support improved opportunities for employment.

However, the council cannot legally discriminate against residents of other boroughs when recruiting and equally we would not want our neighbouring boroughs to discriminate against our residents should they apply for jobs with them.

**8) From Simon McGrath
To the Cabinet Member for Cabinet Member for Education**

Could the Cabinet member confirm whether any infant classes in Merton have more than 30 pupils as was reported in the Evening Standard, and if so which schools are affected? If not true how has he sought to reassure parents in the Borough by rebutting the claims?

Reply

The report in the Evening Standard was somewhat misleading. The report was based on the council's last annual return to the DfE which is based on the January 2014 school census. As confirmed by the information published on the DfE website, just two of our 249 infant classes had more than 30 pupils and in both cases it was

31 pupils. Both were lawful exceptions to the KS1 class sizes requirement, being SEN pupils admitted to the school after the normal school admissions round.

Although it is very early in the new school year to confirm final class sizes, officers in the school admissions team anticipate a similar position to last year.

We have had no indication from parents that there are concerns following the article and I hope this answer sets the record straight.

Supplementary:

The original article in the Evening Standard quoted Tristram Hunt as saying we had seven classes in Merton with more than 36 pupils. My question is what steps has the council taken to inform Mr Hunt this isn't correct and the Evening Standard that it is not correct?

Reply:

We have two classes of 31 and that was because of statutory responsibility. It was a misleading article, and I can assure you that it was a Labour Government that introduced maximum class sizes for infant schools and this plan is something we continue to support and is one of our lasting achievements.

**9) From: Tony Burton
To the Cabinet Member for Environmental Sustainability and Regeneration**

When will the Council implement the Heritage & Design Working Group's March 2014 agreement that (1) Design Review Panel meetings are included in subscriptions options for email alerts; (2) its reports are put on Planning Explorer; and (3) it conducts Design Reviews of Merton Council's development proposals at pre-application stage in public?

Reply

The Heritage and Design Working Group is an informal advisory group to the Council and we have been working to deliver on the suggestions relating to Design Review Panel where practicably possible.

1. The Design Review Panel agendas and minutes have always been made available online at www.merton.gov.uk/designreviewpanel
The DRP isn't administered in the same way as formal committees, we have been able to add DRP to the corporate iCalendar and are working with Democratic services to make the email alert system live in the coming weeks.
2. DRP comments are included, verbatim, in Planning Committee Reports. We have agreement that the Development Control team will include the DRP notes as a separate document on Planning Explorer, for live planning applications (pre-app notes are not made public)
3. It is already in DRP's terms of reference that the Panel review major development proposals by Merton Council at both pre-app and planning

application stage (for buildings, public realm and masterplans) The pre-application process is a method of testing ideas and approaches to development before submitting formal plans. Like many private sector developers, It is not always appropriate to put plans into the public domain prematurely (for reasons ranging from commercial sensitivity to being at an earlier design stage than RIBA stage D (new RIBA stage 3)

The Council will not, as a matter of course, make the DRP notes for LBM, pre-application schemes public. The council has previously decided that it would be inappropriate to implement this recommendation.

**10) From John O'Sullivan
To the Cabinet Member for Environmental Cleanliness and Parking**

Given the recent inappropriately located Recycling Facilities and Smart bin placed in the Mitcham Cricket Green Conservation area, what criteria is used in selecting locations, and at which locations will any new facilities be installed during the rest of 2014?

Reply

We have an agreed process for identifying areas that might benefit from recycling facilities in the borough. Enforcement officers and street cleaning operatives give advice on the potential for fly tipping and abuse in the area. We also consider whether it is a residential area, public area or a main thoroughfare. Providing there is sufficient space, all of these considerations are met, and the land owner agrees to its installation, we trial the facility for 3 - 4 months to test the suitability of the site before actual installation. Using this process, no further sites have been identified for the remainder of 2014.

With respect to the installation of the smart bin, this has been installed to replace a standard litter bin at the very same location that was commonly observed to be full and overflowing. The standard bin has now been removed.

All the new smart bins planned for 2014 have now been installed: 25 new units across the borough.

**11) From Sandra Vogel
To the Cabinet Member for Environmental Sustainability and Regeneration**

Can the council commit to providing clarity on how the delayed Mitcham town centre works will proceed. Will the council (1) publish online and make accessible at Fair Green the full timetable for all elements of the work (2) keep this information up to date (3) publish full explanations for any further slippage.

Reply

Construction for the Rediscover Mitcham project is scheduled to commence in October 2014. The works prior to Christmas will comprise enabling works, including changes to underground services, alterations to bus stops and the removal of the clock tower for refurbishment in mid-November 2014. Full construction works for Phase 1 (Fair Green) will commence in January 2015. Merton Council will shortly (mid September 2014) be providing an update on the Rediscover Mitcham project to all stakeholders via email. A timetable for the works will be included as part of this. This update will be made available on the Rediscover Mitcham website and new information boards will be put up at the vacant ex-McDonald's site in the centre of Mitcham. Regular updates on progress will be sent out in the coming months.

12) From Melanie Nunzet To the Cabinet Member for Environmental Sustainability and Regeneration

Mitcham Common is used by dogwalkers who use the space for profitable gain, eight or more dogs, led by one person. This is dangerous and intimidating for other users. They often do not clean up afterwards. Are there plans to introduce a byelaw limiting the number of dogs per walker?

Reply

Yes there are and the matter of new Dog Control Orders will be presented to and considered by members for their approval imminently. Measures to control the number of dogs being walked by an individual are indeed an identified priority.

13) From Dr D.G. Dawson To the Cabinet Member for Environmental Sustainability and Regeneration

Given Wimbledon Park's significance as a Grade 2* listed park designed by Capability Brown, what plans does the Council have to mark the 300th Anniversary of Capability Brown in 2016; celebrations of which are being considered by the National Trust, English Heritage and numerous other custodians of Capability Brown's work?

Reply

The Council has no specific plans itself to mark the 300th Anniversary of Capability Brown at this stage but may be willing to support any proposals emanating from the local community.

The Council is however planning to undertake a master planning exercise for public park area of Wimbledon Park whose timetable is likely to run into 2016. This will undoubtedly consider and reflect insofar as possible the historical elements introduced by Capability Brown into the wider landscape.

Supplementary:

I welcome your intention to work with Friends of Wimbledon Park. Interested parties also include the All England and Wimbledon clubs. Would the council work with us all in drawing up suitable plans?

Reply:

I think the interested parties would also include the Wimbledon Park Heritage Group, who have also done superb work in Wimbledon Park in the past. I think the attitude we will take on this is that the celebration of Capability Brown impact on Wimbledon Park is probably a matter for the community. If community groups come forward with plans to celebrate Capability Brown, I am sure the council will want to support that, but obviously Capability Brown being so capable made a contribution to many parts of Britain, in particular the large country parks that surround those large Palladian homes of dukes, marquises and earls and that, no doubt there will be many celebrations in many parts of the country.

**14) From Maureen Pascal-Rochester
To the Cabinet Member for Finance**

Merton is losing its entire fraud investigation team on 1st November 2014. This is unprecedented leaving the council exposed to fraud and reputation damage. My question to you is as decision makers, what actions are members taking to reassure their constituents that probity and public funds will be protected?

Reply

In 2010 Central Government agreed to form a Single Fraud Investigation Service (SFIS) to be administered by DWP. This is being carried out on a phased approach, with councils being provided with a transfer date for transfer of fraud cases and employees undertaking the role of investigating housing Benefit fraud.

The current role of Housing Benefit investigations will be transferring to the DWP on the 1st November 2014 along with the staff carrying out this task on a TUPE like basis. There will be also be a reduction in government grant funding from 2015/16.

The council takes its approach to counter fraud seriously and will therefore set up a Corporate Fraud Team to be able to ensure an appropriate response to pro-active and reactive fraud investigations.

Our constituents can be reassured that the council has a strong anti fraud culture and will continue to investigate all cases of fraud as well as ensuring there are strong controls in place to prevent fraud

**15) From Richard Hilton
To the Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Engagement and Equalities**

To what does the Cabinet Member attribute the increase in anti-social behaviour and crime in Mitcham, and what is she doing about it?

Reply

The Mayor of London has significantly cut neighbourhood policing across the borough, not just in Mitcham. No doubt this has had an impact on crime and anti social behaviour in the borough and I know that our excellent local MP Siobhain McDonagh has recently held a public meeting on this issue.

Sadly I don't recall Mr Hilton campaigning against these cuts by the Mayor of London whilst he was a Conservative Councillor in Merton. It is interesting to see his sudden interest in the issue.

For my part I am continuing to work closely with our remaining safer neighbourhood officers, for example with regards to the dispersal zone in North Mitcham, which covers a large proportion of Graveney ward, and on the borough-wide Controlled Drinking Zone which I introduced and which I expect to continue to drive down on ASB and alcohol related crime in Mitcham and borough wide.

Supplementary:

I would like to ask a question around the views of a single resident who told the local newspaper that the council had made Mitcham 'a disgusting place' that we have been promised that regeneration will start in the autumn, but we were told this a year ago, and the year before so my question is how long before these promises are carried out?

Response:

This administration has done everything possible to listen and 'easy residents' concerns on antisocial behaviour, including the MP having a stand at the Mitcham Fair. It was well attend and with the Police all questions were answered. I have been working very hard with officers and the police to make sure we listen to the residents of Mitcham about their concerns around antisocial behaviour. We have taken every precaution possible, taking into consideration the cuts made by the Mayor of London, we will do our best to introduce drinking zones in Mitcham and in the Borough as a whole.

16) From Bob Grahame To the Cabinet Member for Education

Question: Are any of the current Primary School expansion schemes over budget and, if so, which schools and by how much?

Reply

All current primary school expansion projects are within the overall budget allocations.

**17) From Suzanne Evans
To the Leader of the Council**

Question: Do you intend to make any Council Tax cuts in the next four years?

Reply

This majority Labour administration was elected by the people of Merton on a manifesto promise to keep council tax low whilst at the same time protecting services. For the first time in the history of Merton the Labour administration delivered a four year council tax freeze. And we have committed to local people that we will do the same over the next four years. That's an unprecedented eight year council tax freeze. At the same time we have protected local services from the worst of her former political party's cuts. We have managed to do this due to our good financial management and our business like approach to running the council. Residents acknowledged this and agreed with our sensible approach. This is why they resoundingly backed us in the local election to run Merton for the next four years.

**18) From Carlyne Price
To the Cabinet Member for Community and Culture**

Question: Following the much vaunted y-cube homes development can he confirm that these new homes will be prioritised for those who have been in the borough for some time and, if so, what will the selection criteria be?

Reply

The council welcomes an increase in housing supply by the development of Y cube homes and remains committed in ensuring that homes are offered to local people. The council will be working with the Wimbledon YMCA to develop a nominations agreement which will seek to ensure that any person being offered a home will have a local connection with the borough in accordance with its published housing register and nominations policy and the Housing Act 1996 Part 7 (homeless legislation). The policy is clear in that any person who has not lived in Merton for at least one year will not be eligible for a social housing tenancy.

Supplementary:

Under the circumstances do you think the minimum residency requirement should be possibly extended to two or three years?

Response:

This is something we have under consideration to increase it to two years, at the moment it is one year.

19) From Stuart Morrison

To the Cabinet Member for Environmental Sustainability and Regeneration

Question: When will the illegal car sales which have been refused planning consent be removed and the dilapidation of the listed Burn Bullock be put right?

Reply

An enforcement notice was issued on 9th July 2014 against the sale of motor vehicles from the car park.

The notice came into effect on 20th August and the Planning Inspectorate has confirmed that no appeal has been received. The compliance period is two calendar months which expires by 20th October 2014. The owner will be prosecuted if the sale of cars from the car park persists after the compliance date.

With regard to the state of the Building, a Listed Building Repair Notice was issued on 27th August 2014 to require a number of steps to be taken and identified works carried out for the proper preservation of the building.

The notice came into effect immediately and requires the owners to submit a Planning and Listed Building application by 27th October 2014 to cover the required works so the Council will be aware of what materials to be issued. The owner will have 5 months to complete the required works following the grant of permission.

If an application is not received by the Council by the required date of 27th October (or two months after issuing the notice) the Council can apply to the Secretary of State to make or confirm an order for the compulsory purchase of the building.

20) From Andrew Boyce

To the Cabinet Member for Environmental Cleanliness and Parking

Question: Can Council please outline what measures – specific to South Wimbledon – it has undertaken to address the amount of weeds and litter that blight our pavements and verges, and whether its approach is consistent with its obligations under Section IV of the Environmental Protection Act?

Reply

In order to meet our obligations we aim to maintain all residential streets to an acceptable standard of cleanliness by cleaning them regularly at least once a week. Streets are cleaned by manually litter picking and sweeping the areas which need it.

In terms of South Merton specifically, Merton High Street is cleaned at least four times a day, with additional cleaning outside of the tube station. From 8pm-4am we have a dedicated “hot spots” cleaning team who regularly check Merton High Street for litter and who empty bins.

New bins on lampposts to deal with the problem of cigarette and chewing gum waste have also been introduced in the South Wimbledon area.

We undertake weed control in Merton three times a year. This involves spraying live weeds with non-residual chemicals. Roads are checked following the spray and where there is evidence that the spray has not been effective the roads are re-sprayed. The dead weeds are swept away upon a successful treatment. Unfortunately the most recent treatment has not been successful but the contractor is taking steps to re-do this work at no extra cost to the council.

Where we find or receive reports about littering or fly tipping we will attend to rectify which is in line with our obligations under the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

General Questions

1) Councillor Tobin Byers to the Cabinet Member for Community and Culture

Can the Cabinet Member outline his plans for West Barnes library?

Reply

We are progressing plans to redevelop West Barnes Library to provide a brand new and improved library facility with a community hall and public toilets. Throughout the initial consultation we have received many positive comments on the proposal and we would like to hear more from the community. Over the next month we will be consulting with residents to ascertain further requirements for the new library, all of which will help inform the specification that will go out to developers. We hope to have developers appointed by autumn 2014 with the new library scheduled to be opened in autumn 2017.

The redevelopment will also bring new and affordable housing accommodation into the area and is based on the successful Raynes Park Library model. It will enable us to improve one of our much loved libraries whilst making it sustainable for many years to come.

Supplementary:

Can the Cabinet Member explain how the project is affordable to the council?

Reply:

We have at the moment the cheapest libraries in London by a long measure. We also have the best regarded libraries, which is something we can be particularly proud of. I would like to take this opportunity to thank every single one of our volunteers for helping to make our libraries just that, including Councillor Brian Lewis-Lavender who actually kept Mondays going at West Barnes Library over the last four years, and he has done an amazing job, thank you very much indeed. The way we are intending to do it following our consultation, is by redeveloping the same way as we did Raynes Park Library, that is, by putting flats above it and those flats (40% of which will be affordable flats) they will pay for the development. We don't intend to pay anything extra for West Barnes Library. In fact, because it is going to be a more modern building to run, it's actually going to be cheaper, so this, colleagues, is a long term investment. The consultation is up on the website. Anyone can take one of these home tonight and fill it in, I will be very grateful. Thank you.

2) Councillor Daniel Holden to the Cabinet Member for Finance:

Could the Cabinet Member responsible please tell me how many member enquiries are successfully responded to within the 10 working day time frame?

Reply

In the 3 months since 2 June when the new, faster target was introduced, a total of 357 member enquiries were responded to within target times, excluding Housing Needs enquiries, a total of 81%. There are still some outstanding member enquiries for August, so this figure may change. 93% of Housing Needs enquiries were responded to within target times in June. Unfortunately, figures for July and August are not yet available.

Data for previous years, when the target was 5 days longer was as follows:

2011/12 – 78%

2012/13 – 89%

2013/14 - 88%

Supplementary:

I would like to point out that there has been a lack of responses to what are quite simple questions at times. Quite often these then escalate to more senior officers, and if we can't get responses to basic questions. Would you care to explain where you are taking the scheme to enable officers to respond more promptly, so that our residents who ask us these queries can get a response that is proper, correct and factual, and on time?

Response:

I do appreciate that being an opposition councillor can at times be frustrating. However, this administration has improved response times for councillors. We've reduced the target from 15 days to 10 days for general enquiries. I can understand that sometimes people complex and convoluted questions because they are that frustrated that they want to undermine the administration, so there will be occasions where those answers can't be given in 10 days, but we are delivering very well against our targets and I hope to see further improvements in future years.

3) Councillor Mary Curtin to the Cabinet Member for Education

Would the Cabinet member join me in congratulating our A level and GCSE students on this year's exam results?

Reply

Indeed it has been another good year for results in Merton. The overall pass rate for 'A'-Levels is above the national average, the progress made by some groups of pupils in our sixth forms has been strong and it is pleasing that more Merton young people will be able to go on to higher education as a result. At GCSE, the performance of Merton pupils has continued to improve against key measures and I expect more will therefore be able to move on into sixth forms or further education.

My congratulations go to our young people and all our secondary schools.

Supplementary:

With this year's record breaking GCSE results, will no doubt mean that even more parents will be keen to send their children to Merton great secondary schools? Can he update us how he plans to meet this additional need in coming years?

Reply:

As a council we are actively addressing this matter, ensuring that we have the right applications to use our surplus spaces, expanding our existing schools. I am delighted that Harris have put forward an application for a secondary school - an organisation with a proven track record who have already turned around two schools in the borough I have no doubt that our education provision will go from strength to strength and we will have more applicants this year after all the great results for which I congratulate all our students on their magnificent achievements.

4) Councillor Michael Bull to the Cabinet Member for Environmental Sustainability and Regeneration:

What efforts are being made by the council to advance the excellent plans drawn up and supported by the Raynes Park Association to regenerate the area south of the skew-arch in Raynes Park?

Reply

The Council's investment in Raynes Park over the past 5 years has certainly been both beneficial and transformational to the local centre. The improvements already delivered are the result of an excellent on-going partnership between the Raynes Park Association & Community Forum and Council officers in futureMerton, Planning and Highways. We have always been supportive of delivering improvements where we are able to.

The RPA's vision for the area south of the skew arch is a good response for a neglected space. The concept was already agreed in the Raynes Park Enhancement Plan, but requires further detail design, and funding.

As Cabinet Member, I have met with the RPA and officers to discuss options open to us to deliver enhancements to Raynes Park southside. We have always been clear that the majority of funding is dependent on planning gain (s106/CIL) principally from the development of Rainbow Estate, and the Manuplastic sites. I expect the Rainbow scheme will be in planning soon. The Council is in a good position to get the scheme moving; but we must be patient.

We also have further opportunity for public realm enhancements via the Mayor's cycling programme. We have been invited by the Mayor's cycling advisor to prepare a bid to TfL focussed on Raynes Park. Officers are working to weave the RPA's aspirations for the skew-arch into the cycle scheme. The bid is at an early stage and we expect to confirm funding, and consult on proposals early in 2015.

Supplementary:

With regard to regeneration in Merton, can he explain to this chamber the lack of physical progress so far on the redevelopment of the Colliers Wood tower, despite continual promises that work was just about to start there, still we have no real activity on site. Will he assure my residents in Dundonald that progress on regeneration of the area south of the Skew Arch will be nowhere near as torturous as it has been in Colliers Wood.

Reply:

We worked very closely as an administration with the Raynes Park Association who themselves generated the ideas, which we have been very happy to support and supported strongly. Indeed outside Raynes Park Station our improvements outside the station are a demonstration of this council's commitment to improve the quality of the environment around Raynes Park. The answer to the question written down demonstrates how we will act in the future in relation to the Skew Arch. We have been very active in Colliers Wood, we have won significant sums of money from the GLA and we have also contributed capital money to the area of South Wimbledon and Colliers Wood ourselves. We've consulted on plans which are now very advanced for improving the whole public realm in Colliers Wood and works will begin this Autumn from October onwards, first of all in the area between the Sainsbury's bridge and the Priory retail park on a number of improvements there. We will be looking at new cycle facilities on the path by the Wandle and a cycle crossing just before the bus garage. We are looking further in the Spring, taking forward works around the tower. We anticipate doing that in tandem with the developer. We are not the developer of the tower. We don't own it, it is a completely separate company. We are not responsible for progress on the tower. What we have done is work with them where we can to support progress going forward. They have now appointed a contractor, officers are about to have a site meeting with the contractor and we anticipate that this tower will move forward, but it is not entirely in our hands. Nonetheless, the parallel with it, we will be creating a new public space between the tube station and the tower, so I think this council can claim a strong record in Raynes Park and in Colliers Wood and the outcome will be for the benefit of local residents.

5) Councillor Katy Neep to the Leader of the Council

At the last council meeting the Leader told us that he was in discussions with Circle Housing Merton Priory to get them to agree to a series of commitments to protect the interests of our residents living on High Path, Eastfields and Ravensbury estates. Could he outline what progress he has made in this regard?

Reply

I am pleased to say that my discussions with Circle Housing Merton Priory have been fruitful. I asked CHMP to sign up to 10 commitments to ensure local residents are at the heart of any regeneration plans and I am delighted that they have now agreed to this. An official signing took place on 4 September when the chairman of

CHMP, Sir Robin Young, came to Merton to personally put his name to the commitments.

The commitments cover a range of issues, including requiring CHMP to consider residents' interests at all times, to offer current homeowners at least the market value of their homes should they wish to sell their home to CHMP, to keep disruption to a minimum and to continue to maintain residents' homes, ensuring a high quality, responsive repairs service. CHMP has also given a commitment that it will not profit from any regeneration and will use any surplus to provide more housing or to improve the existing estates.

Supplementary:

Residents of High Path are particularly keen that the repair service is not neglected while the regeneration is being consulted on, and that the backlog of repairs that has been built up is addressed as a matter of urgency. Ward councillors and residents also expressed concern about recent allegations in mishandling of repairs by Circle's contractors? Could the Leader please confirm that the agreement with Circle was that these repairs will be prioritised and that the allegations of mishandling will be independently investigated by the council.

Reply:

I would like to look at commitment number 8, of the 10 commitments that we signed up to, and this is available on the website with Sir Robin Young, the former Permanent Secretary at the DTI, and he is now chairman of Circle Housing. Commitment number 8 reads as follows: Circle Merton Priory will continue to maintain the homes across the three neighbouring boroughs throughout the planning process until the regeneration starts, including ensuring a high quality, responsive repairs service. So that is critical to the regeneration should it go ahead and whether it goes ahead or not, we want them to lay great emphasis on a responsive repairs service.

I did get on the phone to Circle Housing Merton Priory Homes and after the front page of our brilliant local newspaper, the Wimbledon Guardian, I also had a word with a number of officers, quite high up in Circle, and they have assured me they will look into those allegations, and assured me that they have moved on since then are grappling with the backlog, they are catching up and the other thing they assured me was that if there is meeting in place to discuss these repairs I would be very welcome, as the Leader of the Council to attend. I know our cabinet member does intend to attend the next one, so I can give that reassurance to you and to your residents.

6) Councillor Oonagh Moulton to the Leader of the Council:

What plans, if any, does the new administration have to revise the Members' Code of Conduct or the Protocol on Planning Matters?

Reply

There are no plans to revise the Members' Code of Conduct which was approved by Council on 11 July 2011. The current Planning Protocol was approved by full Council on 27 March 2013.

Supplementary:

Is the Leader concerned about the potential for conflict of interest to arise between the member of this council who is setting the actual planning policy and the councillor chairing the planning application committee - given that they share the breakfast table. What does he say to residents of Merton who might question this situation, particularly when it comes to taking decisions on contentious planning applications and Madam Mayor, the reputation of the council?

Reply:

The answer to that question is there are no concerns; we have a robust conflict of interest policy. All my cabinet members and all my committee chairs on licensing or planning are the best people for the job.

7) Councillor Peter Southgate for the Cabinet member for Education:

"What are the total legal costs incurred (including staff time as well as external fees) in defending the proposed expansion of Dundonald Primary School against legal actions brought by the *Save Our Rec* campaign?"

Reply

Legal proceedings brought against the Council are still ongoing. The current legal costs for defending the council's proposed expansion of Dundonald Primary School amount to approximately £25,000 of counsel's fees and £10,000 of legal officer's time.

Supplementary:

I look forward to the conclusion of the final legal action and I hope he notifies us once it has finally completed. My question is what is his estimate of the total time that has been lost through the actions in delaying this expansion for this school?

Reply:

It is regrettable that it has been delayed, we had hoped to have the extra class available for this school year. We are still hoping to provide for the next school year, but we are still going through the judicial process as members may be aware, we are in court again on Friday as they will be trying to get a judgement to stop the expansion proceeding. This is extremely regrettable; Merton Council to date has

won every single hearing with this. It is time for us to provide these much needed school places. The judicial review hearing has cost the council money, but we believe it is money well spent providing school places in an area of very high demand for school places, which will considerably enhance school facilities at a school rated as outstanding by Ofsted.

8) Councillor Ross Garrod to the Cabinet Member for Environmental Sustainability and Regeneration

Can the Cabinet Member estimate how many people used our parks and green spaces over the summer months?

Reply

Owing to the large number and widespread distribution of open space across the borough we do not, unfortunately, have accurate data for the annual attendance at our parks and open spaces. Estimates of our annual visitor numbers are in the range of 3 million however, and approximately two thirds of these visits occur in the period April to September. In other words, in the region of 2 million visitors during the summer months overall.

In a typical year, some 150,000 people use Wimbledon Park alone during the fortnight of the Wimbledon Championships.

Supplementary:

I am delighted that so many people are able to enjoy our parks this summer, and was pleasantly pleased to see that the new water playing facility at Tamworth rec is now open for many residents to enjoy. Can he explain how he is paying for this to our residents please?

Response:

This is an excellent water facility, very similar to the excellent facility in Wimbledon Park. They were paid for (the total cost was about £200,000) by the substantial generous gift of an individual who does not want to be named. Through a charitable trust just as he had contributed to the similar facility in Wimbledon Park. He has acted in connection with the Wimbledon Park Heritage group. He funded the facility in Wimbledon Park and wanted to fund a further facility in Mitcham. So about 2/3 of the money has come from him, through the charitable trust, and a third from the council.

9) Councillor Hamish Badenoch to the Cabinet Member for Environmental Sustainability and Regeneration:

Can the Cabinet Member confirm that this administration is committed to the vital importance of implementing 20mph zones (where residents are in favour)? Given this commitment, can he also confirm what funds have been set aside this year for

the implementation of 20mph zones pending the outcome of the cross-borough enquiry on 20mph zone enforcement?

Reply

The Council remains committed to managing excessive or inappropriate speeds in residential road. We are currently reviewing the effectiveness of all our 20mph zones and limits in the borough and also gathering intelligence on the effectiveness of borough wide 20mph zones/limits in London and nationally to inform future decision on speed management and agree policy shortly. An action plan will then be developed following the decision, which will include identifying the necessary funding to implement any agreed measures.

Supplementary:

Given the importance of this issue, I want to be sure the residents of my ward don't read his answer, as kicking the issue into the long grass. Can the cabinet member confirm what steps he is personally taking to expedite this shortly and confident in the efficacy of his own adverts, will he commit to providing funding for 20mph zones this year.

Response:

We are conducting research at the moment. We are very sure that the 20mph zones we have already introduced across the borough have had a significant impact. We are much less sure that the 20 mph limits, that are just signs rather than a physical traffic calming, have had an impact. We don't anticipate taking forward any more schemes until the report comes back and it will be reported to scrutiny on the efficacy of 20 mph zones. Once we have had the report, and we are sure we have good evidence base as to what is effective and what is not, then we will draw up the budget accordingly, but in the past we have funded these schemes, there is no stop in the scheme. We have depended on a great extent on Transport for London and the money they are able to provide for road safety schemes. When that money is reduced, we have fewer schemes. There is no prohibition on such schemes. If any councillors in this chamber wish to bring forward any particular road traffic calming schemes we will be very happy to look at them. The principle upon which we will be working is to work closely with the ward councillors and closely with local residents. What we are anticipating is that there will be consultation next month in October. All ward councillors will be invited to meetings around the physical interventions planned in their wards this financial year. I anticipate that we will be working towards in the spring to a further consultation with ward councillors about the physical interventions we anticipate for the following three years so ward councillors are able to have a very full dialogue of what they think is required in their local area.

10) Councillor Stan Anderson to the Cabinet Member for Community and Culture

Could he update us on the findings of the recent consultation with local residents regarding his plans to replace Morden Park pool?

Reply

The recent consultation on the replacement of Morden Park Pools carried out on the council's behalf by consultation company PPS confirmed that the council was right to use the Sport England Affordable Leisure Centre Model as a basis for our new centre as this was endorsed by the majority of users and included strong support for the addition of the sports hall, gym and associated health & fitness facilities. They noted that although the base model included a sports hall and there was strong support for it, the respondents rarely mentioned the sports to be included, hence the detail of these sports is less well represented in the consultation findings.

As regards the additional facilities the local residents would wish to have included, ranked in the community's priority order, are: Firstly, a café, followed by the desire for the facility to be able to continue to offer diving facilities either by incorporating a movable floor in the secondary pool and/or by incorporating a movable floor in the main pool. On the size of the swimming pool the majority accepted that the 25m length would be needed for most users, but were concerned about the availability of water space to accommodate everyone and hence the third priority is to increase the width of the main pool to 8 lanes. Some of the younger respondents and the representations from our primary schools requested some fun/water play equipment for them to be included. Finally, the list extended to climbing wall, a sauna, a crèche, etc.

Supplementary:

It is great that so many people have participated in the consultation and that has delivered such results. Does he think that the consultation shows that residents share our vision for the centre. Can he tell us how technology will help us not exceed the budget?

Response:

There are two answers to that. First of all yes it does show our residents' share our vision. It was a brilliant piece of consultation. I hope everyone here took part in it because it was a very grown up way of doing things. It was saying you have got £10 million quid to spend on a pool/leisure centre, how do you want us to spend it? People responded very well, because we were treating them like our colleagues, and they have come up with some very fine answers. The thing about the modern technology, this is why I am so particularly proud that we are developing this swimming pool now not four or eight years ago for that matter, because technology has moved on so fortunately it has been made possible to build leisure centres much much cheaper using the technology that was used in the Olympic Park etc and that has been used all over Europe. One of the really cool things is that they have these movable floors they bring in, so what we can do, is bring in movable floors and below the movable floor, and because hot water rises, only the top half of the water will get heated up, so the water down below will not cost anything, and that is technology, I love this! It is going to be all about technology, and if you ask more questions about it, I will tell you more about it, because I am very enthusiastic about it.

Strategic Theme Questions

Public Health

S1) Councillor Peter McCabe to the Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care

Can the Cabinet Member confirm the process for the appointment of specialist and diagnostic services at the new Nelson Centre?

Reply

I have contacted the local NHS and been sent the following response to your question:

“The competitive tendering for the provision of specialist consultation and diagnostic services at the Nelson Local Care Centre have been undertaken in accordance with EU procurement law. The CCG commissioned procurement expertise through the South London Commissioning Support Unit (CSU) to provide guidance and assurance of the procurement process. In addition, the MCCG Governing Body Independent Nurse representative attended all stages of the procurement process to provide assurance to the Governing Body that due process has been followed.

It was considered that due to the nature of the service, the estimated contract value and in keeping with the EU principles, that the tender opportunity should be widely advertised. These adverts were placed on the Supply2Health website and on the Official Journal for the European Union website on the 14th March 2014.

The procurement process used was a restricted procedure which is a two stage process allowing the CCG to issue a Pre-Qualification Questionnaire in order to draw up a short list of suitably qualified parties. Four PQQs were submitted and all four met the required criteria and were shortlisted to move forward to the next stage of the procurement process.

The Invitation to Tender (ITT) was published electronically on the Bravo Portal to all bidders on 28th May 2014. Prior to this the CCG had held a bidders day on the 21st May setting out their visions and expectations of the services to be delivered at the Nelson. The procurement advisers also emphasised the process and the timelines for the submission of the returned tenders.

The ITT pack included:

- Details for the return of the submissions along with details of the evaluation criteria and how these had been weighted and would be scored.
- The clinical service specifications detailing the services that the successful bidder would be required to deliver;
- The questions/information that the bidder was required to answer/provide in their submission; and
- Further information about the Nelson e.g. building layout, ICT systems, equipment, estate cost etc. that would assist the bidders in producing their submissions.

At all stages of the process information was supplied to all bidders at the same time via the Bravo Portal.

All four shortlisted parties submitted their tender return on 7th July 2014. A full compliance check was undertaken by the procurement team prior to the issue of the submissions to the evaluation team.

On 16th July all bidders were invited to present their submissions to the evaluation team. Each bidder provided a short presentation followed by a question and answer.

As part of the evaluation process site visits were organised (17th and 18th July) with each bidder to allow them to showcase their services. These visits were overseen by the procurement advisers to ensure probity and equal treatment of all bidders.

Moderation and adjudication meetings were held on the 9th July 2014 and 6th & 14th August 2014. These meetings allowed the subject matter experts (evaluation panel) to discuss the submissions, highlight areas of concerns and generate clarifications for the bidders that the panel needed in order to arrive at a consensus score for the bidders.

The evaluation has now concluded and the final recommendation report is being drafted for consideration and decision by the MCCG Governing Body on 25th September 2014. Following the decision to award the contract a statutory 2 week standstill period will be in place to allow for any challenges to be made against the decision. Once this period has expired and any challenges, if received and have not been upheld, then the announcement of the preferred bidder will be made public.”

Supplementary:

Is the cabinet member as concerned as I am that between April and December of last year, the BBC reported, that 70% of NHS contracts were being put out to the private sector. Does she agree that the priority should be meeting patient need, not generating profits for shareholders?

Reply:

Thank you for your supplementary question. I can understand a profit element is required and your concern. I'll pass this on to the officer concerned.

S2) Councillor Gilli Lewis-Lavender to the Leader of the Council:

Will the Leader please let me have sight of the document, on which he based a large part of his election campaign, that states that the Government intends to close St Helier Hospital?

Reply

Cllr Lewis-Lavender is very well aware of the attempts to close St Helier hospital's A&E, maternity and related services under the Better Services Better Value programme. I believe all of the relevant documentation and detailed plans are still online on the South West London NHS website. Since those proposals were stopped following a successful campaign by local residents, the new five year plan being proposed for health services in South West London – available on the Merton CCG website, which I am sure the Councillor is fully aware – outlines plans to “change the way we deliver services” and suggests A&E units are downgraded by “the introduction of two levels of emergency departments (Major Emergency Centre and Emergency Centre)”. Perhaps Cllr Lewis-Lavender does not realise what this means but local residents fully understand that this is yet again another attempt to downgrade our local hospital.

I recently wrote to the Secretary of State for Health, Jeremy Hunt, asking him to remove the chair of Merton CCG from his post in the light of these continued efforts to downgrade St Helier hospital. Regrettably, the Secretary of State has refused to do this, in yet another example of how little this government cares about our local hospital.

Supplementary:

Would the Leader agree that the information that has been tabled in the reply was not accurately relayed to residents in the recent local elections? Many residents were lead to believe that the hospital was going to be closed completely.

Response:

I have here the Hansard Parliamentary Debates which I will leave for her. I will refer her to column 148 to column 156, 10th March 2014. This sets out the concerns of the Member of Parliament for Mitcham and Morden Siobhain McDonagh, in a debate with the Jane Ellison MP the relevant minister and Paul Burstow and a number of others. All the arguments that we used, were the arguments used by Siobhain McDonagh used as recorded within and have come from Hansard.

S3) Councillor Joan Henry to the Cabinet Member for Environmental Cleanliness and Parking

The cleanliness of our local environment is important to residents' sense of wellbeing which is a key determinant of good health. Can the Cabinet Member update us on the success or otherwise of the litter enforcement pilot in our town centres?

Reply

The litter enforcement pilot has been operating since April 2014. This pilot has increased our enforcement capacity by 100% and has enabled the targeting of littering in our town centres. A six week exercise took place at the end of April 2014 until the first week in June where offenders were warned about litter dropping, each offender at the time was issued a zero rated ticket and warned about the offence. As from the 2nd June 2014 all fixed penalty notices issued are for £75 fines. Between 2 June 2014 and 1

September 2014 we issued 1759 FPNs for littering. The presence and action of these officers has ensured that people know that Merton takes littering seriously and have a zero tolerance approach to those that drop litter. We have also noted the increase in use of the Councils chewing gum/butt bins. The initial pilot was scheduled to run for six months with an option to extend, an evaluation of the first six months is now being completed.

Supplementary:

Can the cabinet member update us on whether there are any further plans to roll out this approach in other areas?

Reply:

It has been successful, in the 6 months in which the pilot scheme has been operating is up in October, so then we will look at that and see how successful it has been and what more we can do. Your question whether there are any plans to roll this out in other areas, I'm not sure whether you mean geographically or enforcement, I'd like to think both. Certainly we've been in parks and I'd like to move that on to other areas, town centres and green spaces, but certainly I'd like to move to other areas of enforcement as well. There was a question earlier regarding dog control laws, maybe that's something to look at as well, but it will depend on feasibility.

S4) Councillor Najeeb Latif to the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health:

How do the most recently published figures for life expectancy in the east of the borough compare with previous figures for life expectancy, both across Merton as a whole and specifically in the east of the borough? Please provide figures broken down both by ward and by specific town centre areas.

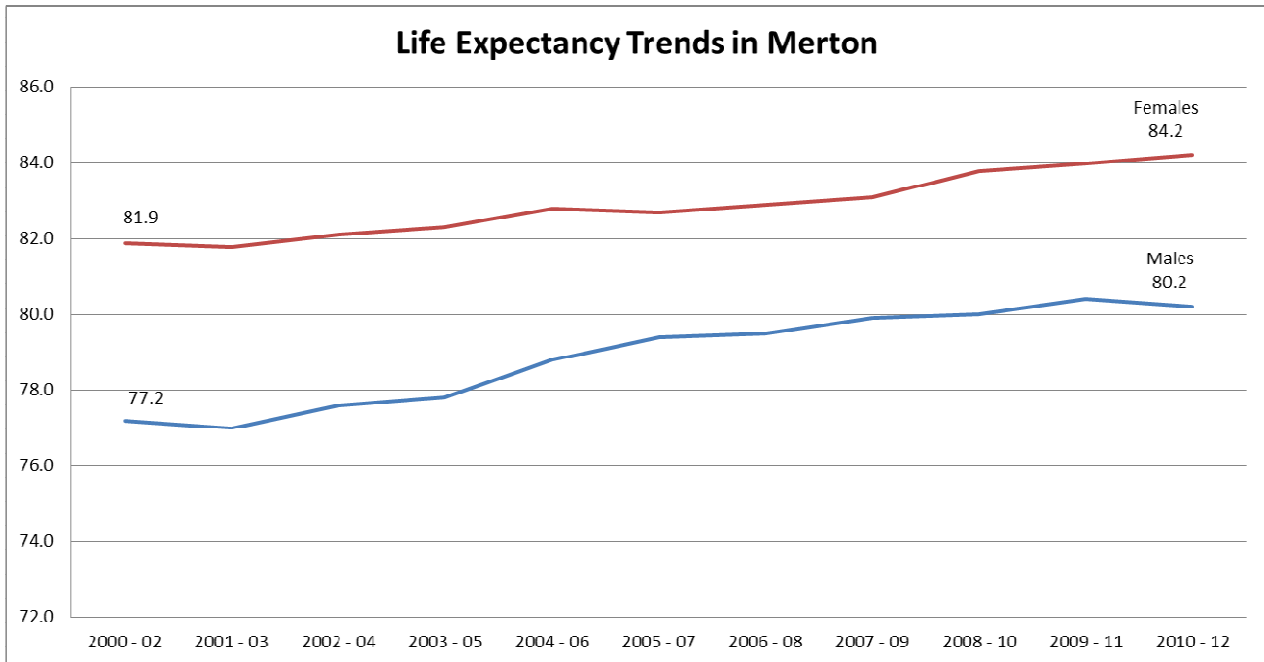
Reply

Please find attached a graph setting out the trend in life expectancy from 2000-2002 to 2010-2012. Across the borough life expectancy has gone up. For males life expectancy has increased from 77.2 years to 80.2 (an increase of 3 years) and for females from 81.9 to 84.2 (an increase of 2.3 years).

In the east of the borough specifically, I am pleased to report that life expectancy has also increased over this time period. I have included maps to show life expectancy in each of the twenty wards in Merton, clearly showing that life expectancy has increased in almost all of the eastern wards. Nonetheless, there is still a life expectancy gap between the east and west of the borough, although there has been some reduction in the gap for women in particular. The gap for men between the more deprived and less deprived areas is 8.5 years (an increase of around half of a year from 2009-2011) and for women the gap is 4.9 years (a decrease of a little over 1 year from 2009-2011).

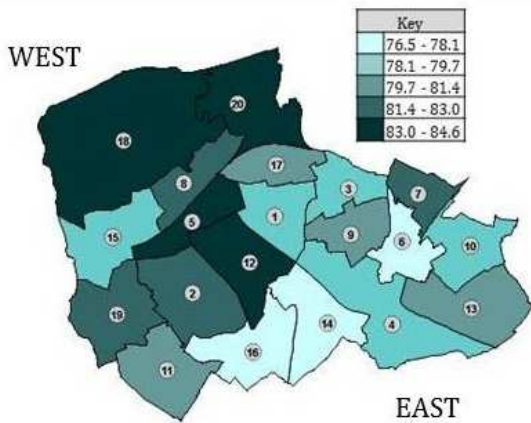
However, changes in life expectancy need to be measured over significant periods of time so any changes need to be fully embedded and sustained before success can be measured.

Life Expectancy in Merton



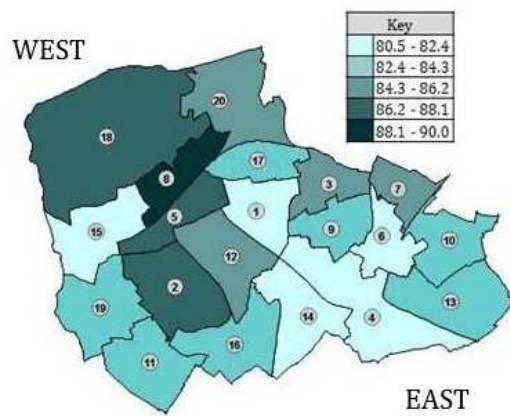
Life Expectancy at Birth by Ward: Males

Source: Local Health



Life Expectancy at Birth by Ward: Females

Source: Local Health



LEGEND					
1	Abbey	6	Figge's Marsh	11	Lower Morden
2	Cannon Hill	7	Graveney	12	Merton Park
3	Colliers Wood	8	Hillside	13	Pollards Hill
4	Cricket Green	9	Lavender Fields	14	Ravensbury
5	Dundonald	10	Longthornton	15	Raynes Park
				16	St. Helier
				17	Trinity
				18	Village
				19	West Barnes
				20	Wimbledon Park

Supplementary

Given the council's new public health responsibilities, what practical measures will the cabinet member intend to make to tackle significantly lower life expectancy in the east of the borough?

Reply

I can say that the Council is working with the CCG to build a health centre in the East part of the borough and that should help and be able to tackle that.

S5) Councillor Sally Kenny to the Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care

Can the Cabinet Member confirm whether Merton has the right amount of GPs for the number of residents we have, particularly bearing in mind our ageing population?

Reply

The local NHS has confirmed that the national average list population per whole time GP is circa 1,600 - 1,800 but does vary due to the nature of the population served by the practice.

Unfortunately NHS England are unable to provide figures for Merton so I am unable to confirm with them whether Merton has the right amount for GPs for the number of residents we have.

However, NHS England state that the number of GPs is only one factor in looking at the provision and quality of primary medical services - in some areas Merton practices exceed national averages but in other areas such as patient satisfaction there is work to be undertaken to improve the performance. They have provided some data which I attached in relation to local targets. (Appendix A)

Supplementary:

Does the cabinet member agree with me that it is incredible that NHS England cannot tell us whether or not we have the right number of GPs in the borough. Might this explain why local residents are telling me that they often find it difficult to get appointment when they need one.

Response:

I agree and share the concern, as I do too would want to know and I think it important information to know and it should be on our agenda to look at, to see as to whether there is enough GPs in the area. In Colliers Wood, we know our residents are having problems getting appointments to see their GPs. It is an issue that needs to be looked at and as I said I share that concern

S6) Councillor Charlie Chirico to the Cabinet Member for Children's Services:

It is reported that there are around 20,000 cases of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) every year in the UK with communities from those countries where FGM is particularly prevalent most at risk. Given the difficulties in getting victims to speak out about FGM, can the Cabinet Member tell me what type of active programmes the council currently operates in Merton's schools and how these are improving monitoring of this important issue locally?

It is reported that there are around 20,000 cases of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) every year in the UK with communities from those countries where FGM is particularly prevalent most at risk. Given the difficulties in getting victims to speak out about FGM, can the Cabinet Member tell me what type of active programmes the council currently operates in Merton's schools and how these are improving monitoring of this important issue locally?

Reply

While we have no evidence that the prevalence of Female Genital Mutilation is high in Merton it is clear from evidence that this practice is an area for concern for some children within the community and it has been reviewed by Merton Safeguarding Children Board (MSCB).

The MSCB has identified this as a main topic for awareness raising and equipping professionals working with young people, including schools, with knowledge and skills to intervene appropriately. The Board follows national guidance through awareness raising via posters & leaflets and the provision of resource packs for professionals including school based staff. This is supported by twice yearly multi-agency training sessions. The training ensures the legislative framework alongside national and local guidance is understood by professionals in the local children's workforce.

Supplementary:

I think it's fair to say that it is not just an issue in our borough but one that's across London as well. So what as a Council are we doing to kick start FGM referrals from front line professionals like school nurses, teachers or the equivalent and the victims themselves, to tackle the issue and the surrounding hurdles ?

Response:

Thank you for raising this subject which is a barbaric practice and is absolutely shocking and needs addressing, which we are in sensible and sensitive terms. We have been actually working for some time to identify those who may be at risk. You are absolutely right that we need to have schools, health visitors and everybody that girls come into contact with to make them aware and that everyone is receiving training on the frontline etc. Only last week the Head of Education was in touch with every school in the borough to alert them to girls who might be returning from countries where this practice is a custom. In every case and every area of safeguarding our children we have to be ever vigilant, we can never be complacent, that we have everything in place to address it. We are absolutely determined that we will keep an eye on this. As we are all school governors, we need to bring this up at school governors' meetings, make sure that it is on the agenda for discussion in schools and if there are any areas of concern, please let us know about it.

S7) Councillor Peter McCabe to the Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care

Can the Cabinet Member provide up to date data on each of the GP practices in Merton as to whether they are achieving their targets in terms of waiting times for appointments?

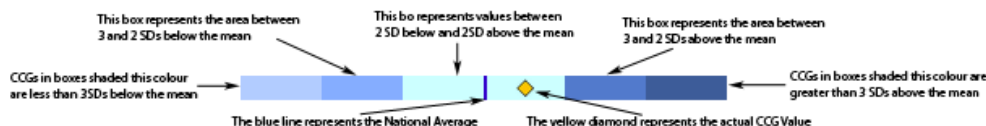
Reply

According to the local NHS there are currently no targets for waiting times, with contracts requiring practices to meet the reasonable needs of their population. They have however furnished me with the latest GP patient survey results for Merton practices which I have attached) and you will see the variation between practices in patients satisfaction over a range of indicators. The Area Team and the CCG will need to address this variation.

DISPLAYING DATA FOR 08R - NHS Merton CCG

For help with the chart values, hover the mouse over the value

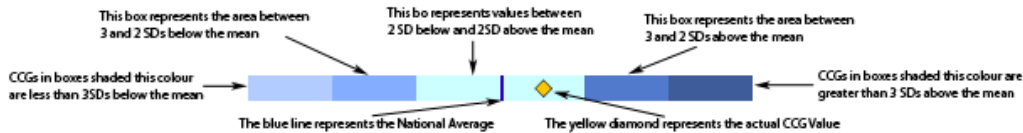
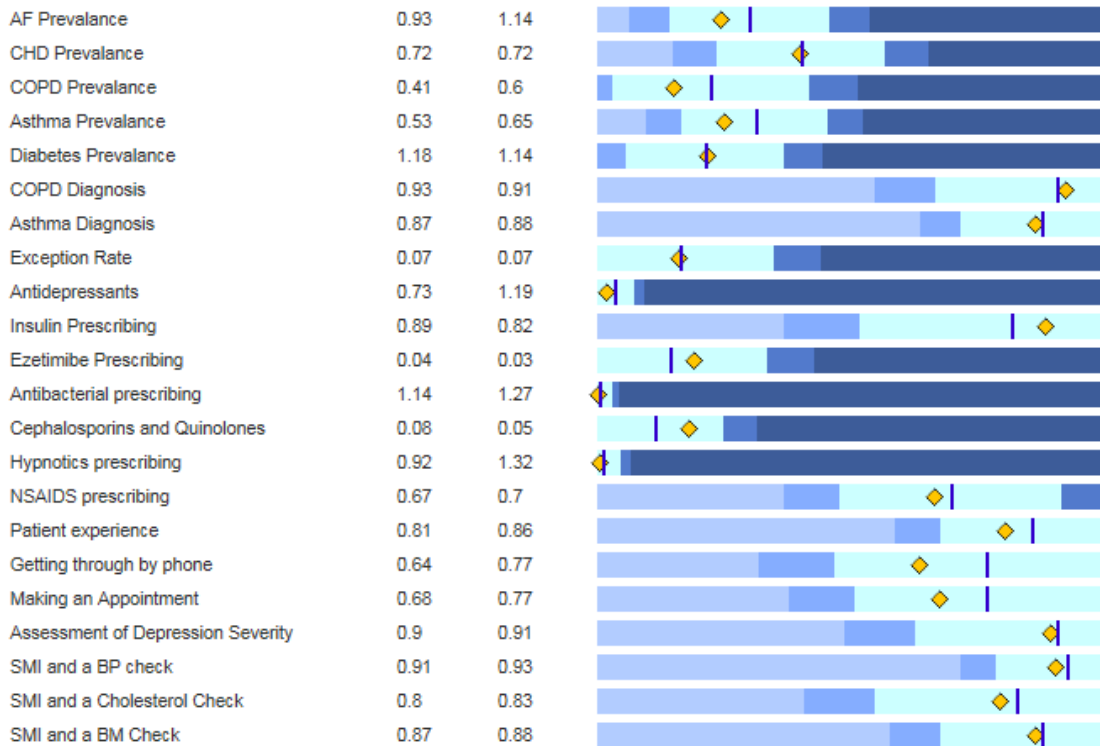
Indicator Name	Group	England	Chart
Cancer Admissions	0.16	0.13	
Two Week Wait	0.49	0.49	
Emergency Admissions	70.48	89.78	
A+E Attendances	302.2	315.86	
CHD Admissions	0.08	0.08	
Asthma Admissions	0.02	0.02	
Diabetes Admissions	0.02	0.02	
COPD Admissions	0.12	0.12	
Dementia Admissions	0.11	0.06	
ACS Admissions	0.01	0.01	
Diabetes BP monitoring	0.73	0.73	
AF on anticoagulation	0.79	0.83	
Cervical Smears	0.8	0.82	
Diabetes Cholesterol monitoring	0.8	0.81	
Diabetes HbA1C monitoring	0.72	0.75	
CHD cholesterol monitoring	0.78	0.8	
Health checks for mental illness	0.88	0.88	
Flu Vaccination (Over 65s)	0.66	0.73	
Flu Vaccination (at risk)	0.47	0.53	
Diabetes Retinal Screening	0.9	0.91	
AF Prevalance	0.93	1.14	



Merton CCG: Latest information on primary care performance

DISPLAYING DATA FOR 08R - NHS Merton CCG

For help with the chart values, hover the mouse over the value



Supplementary:

This is the biggest problem that my constituents are reporting that they cannot get an appointment with their GP. Does the cabinet member agree that this chart is more confusing than enlightening and was she as disturbed as me to hear that the Health Scrutiny Panel, following the Tories reorganisation of the NHS, this information is not monitored at local level. Isn't this a disgrace?

Response:

What I will do is to ask the officers to look into this to see whether we can simplify the information and look at it in more detail.

S8) Councillor David Simpson to the Cabinet Member for Environmental Sustainability and Regeneration:

Has the Cabinet Member heard of the 'Cycle Safety Shield'? Will he be recommending that this or similar equipment is added to the council's fleet of vehicles in order to safeguard health and protect the public from unnecessary accidents?

Reply

The cycle safety shield is a commercially available product designed to warn drivers of the presence of cyclists, motorcyclists and pedestrians. The system was looked at, as part of our cycle awareness project, this year. No decision has yet been made on its implementation. The cost of the system is circa £3000 per vehicle.

The principle cycle awareness / safety system is FORS. This system, which is endorsed by Transport for London, requires a number of initiatives to be undertaken in order to attain accreditation. This is the standard that The LB Merton is currently working toward. This system is more comprehensive than the cycle shield product in that it covers a number of areas. These include additional signage on the vehicles, increased driver training / awareness regarding cyclists and other vulnerable road users, a comprehensive audit of the operating and professional standards of the vehicle operator, requirements regarding the professional qualifications of the staff employed within the operations area, increased driver training with regard to vehicle loading, operation, safety checks and vehicle condition. (Full list of requirements is available)

It is anticipated that LBM will attain FORS accreditation by December 2014.

It may be that the Cycle Safety Shield system could be incorporated as part of the FORS accreditation process which is why the system was demonstrated to us. We are not considering implementing it as we seek bronze accreditation but will give further consideration when we seek silver.

Currently our large vehicles are fitted with reversing aided cameras, reverse beepers, all round visibility mirrors (6 mirrors per LGV vehicle) and we have low cabs with bigger windows allowing the driver better visibility of the road.

Supplementary:

Given the failure of the borough to get funding from the mini Holland scheme, would he acknowledge that it is even more important that we achieve the minimum bronze accreditation and confirm that officers would be given every encouragement and resource so to do that by the end of this year? How about giving cyclists a real bonus and going for gold in 2015 to help further reduce injuries and deaths on the roads in London?

Response:

It is very important that we achieve bronze by December 2014. My belief is that it is officers have ever resources and encouragement to do so. It very important that we achieve safety, circumstances and an environment of safety for cyclists and that must include heavy Lorries and the way they inter react with cyclists.

In respect of the mini Holland scheme which is a separate matter; We were one of the short listed boroughs, and as such we're still within the programme. I have had a recent

meeting with Andrew Gilligan, who has been through those elements of our bid that he wants to take forward. They will include a scheme in Wimbledon town centre, one in Raynes Park and cycle routes from Wandsworth through to Merton. We are looking at different funding pots for those schemes, but they add up to quite a significant programme. So we have put in an initial bid for Wimbledon town centre, which we will want to refine and if that proves successful we will want great consultation with ward members and residents. Where possible we will be looking at choices, on how can we deliver those objectives. Overall I believe that within 18 months to 2 years we should have significantly improved cycle facilities in the borough, through the hard and detailed work of Merton Council and such funding the TFL can provide

S9) Councillor Marsie Skeete to the Cabinet Member for Children's Services

What action is being taken to improve the take up of childhood immunisation in Merton?

Reply

Childhood immunisations are the responsibility of NHS England and Public Health England. The local Director of Public Health (DPH) must assure that a robust system is in place to deliver childhood immunisations.

A catch-up campaign for MMR was run across London by PHE in the summer of 2013. This resulted in some increased immunisation coverage for the at risk unimmunised children within that cohort.

During 2013-14, LBM Healthier Communities and Older People Overview and Scrutiny invited PHE, at the request of the DPH, to provide a report on childhood immunisations for Merton. The report highlighted progress on ensuring the quality of GP practice level data, a reason frequently given for poor performance. Immunisation rates did improve as a result of this exercise.

Merton CCG recently appointed a Clinical Director Children and Maternity, who includes childhood immunisations in her portfolio. She is reviewing a plan developed in 2013 by Public Health and the Merton CCG to address low levels of immunisations in Merton. Development of a service specification for the provider for data returns to PHE has improved data returns from practices and all practices now upload immunisation data electronically. Practices were visited in April 2014 to check that they have robust internal systems and processes and manage defaulters systematically and remove children who had moved out of the area and registered at another GP practice.

PH staff attend each of the three monthly GP practice locality meetings to share performance data on childhood immunisations, among other things and to stimulate discussion among GPs to share experience of those practices that achieve higher levels of immunisations.

A seasonal flu training session focused on targeting both adults and children to improve flu vaccine coverage in at risk children and those aged 2-4 years as well as routine childhood immunisations.

Supplementary:

As a member of the scrutiny immunisation task group, I am particularly interested in the work to date, and thus would she update us on how she is engaging with hard to reach communities together on uptake of child immunisation?

Response:

It is difficult to engage with all the different communities with different ethnic backgrounds, as they have different ways of engaging. I hope that she will be satisfied with the answer that in general terms we are addressing in a way that we haven't be able to in the past as we as the Council have only taking over responsibilities for public health just over a year ago. What I would like to say is something that you and many of my colleagues would not have known, I run a ladies liaison group up at the Mosque up the road. One of the issues that I have been addressing for some time is the uptake of general health for particularly ladies with young children, who were not aware of how to pick up such health support. Because of the work involved by Children's Centres, and with the Mosque, I am having some leaflets printed about immunisation in Urdu, and these are being distributed to residents who's English is not their first language.

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Select Region:	LONDON
Select Area Team:	SOUTH LONDON
Select CCG:	NHS Merton CCG
Select Benchmark Group:	CCG

THE GP PATIENT SURVEY



PRACTICE CODE	PRACTICE NAME	PARENT CCG CODE	PARENT CCG NAME	Ease of getting through on the telephone (Proportion that find it easy to get through on the telephone)	Benchmark Group - CCG	Ease of getting through on the telephone (Denominator)	Helpfulness of receptionist (Proportion that find the receptionist helpful)	Benchmark Group - CCG	Helpfulness of receptionist (Denominator)	Overall experience of making an appointment (Proportion with good overall experience)	Benchmark Group - CCG	Overall experience of making an appointment (Denominator)	Confidence and trust in GP (Proportion who definitely or to some extent have confidence and trust)	Benchmark Group - CCG	Confidence and trust in GP (Denominator)	Confidence and trust in nurse: YES	Benchmark Group - CCG	Confidence and trust in nurse (Denominator)	Satisfaction with opening hours: positive	Benchmark Group - CCG	Satisfaction with opening hours (Denominator)	Overall experience of GP surgery (Proportion with good overall experience)	Benchmark Group - CCG	Overall experience of GP surgery (Denominator)	Recommending GP surgery to someone who has just moved to the local area: YES	Benchmark Group - CCG	Recommending GP surgery (Denominator)	TOTAL SCORE ALL QUESTIONS
H85076	STONECOT SURGERY	OBR	NHS MERTON CCG	63.21	●	147	88.99	●	147	70.24	●	141	91.90	●	142	88.53	●	136	81.40	●	142	87.07	●	145	83.61	●	145	24
H85033	TAMWORTH HOUSE MEDICAL CENTRE.	OBR	NHS MERTON CCG	36.50	●	146	68.36	●	146	43.68	●	139	89.76	●	143	77.16	●	132	69.64	●	145	62.28	●	142	61.38	●	143	14
H85101	GRAND DRIVE SURGERY	OBR	NHS MERTON CCG	87.51	●	143	93.97	●	141	87.33	●	136	96.69	●	138	80.19	●	127	82.99	●	140	90.27	●	139	89.31	●	138	24
H85051	LAMBTON ROAD MEDICAL PRACTICE	OBR	NHS MERTON CCG	51.32	●	150	82.49	●	150	59.82	●	150	93.42	●	149	82.33	●	138	79.75	●	150	76.26	●	150	75.42	●	150	23
H85027	WIMBLETON VILLAGE PRACTICE	OBR	NHS MERTON CCG	76.73	●	157	81.80	●	157	73.63	●	150	94.68	●	150	84.18	●	144	62.33	●	154	87.67	●	149	78.47	●	153	22
H85028	PRINCES ROAD SURGERY	OBR	NHS MERTON CCG	74.91	●	159	86.96	●	159	77.79	●	149	81.67	●	155	65.38	●	137	77.90	●	157	85.07	●	153	74.32	●	155	19
H85016	CANNON HILL LANE MEDICAL PRACTICE	OBR	NHS MERTON CCG	53.49	●	132	77.51	●	131	59.32	●	128	92.13	●	127	89.52	●	123	66.67	●	129	85.87	●	130	72.77	●	132	21
H85070	CENTRAL MEDICAL CENTRE	OBR	NHS MERTON CCG	38.34	●	121	79.25	●	121	50.60	●	115	86.96	●	118	65.47	●	110	75.36	●	118	62.33	●	116	51.39	●	120	12
H85029	WIDE WAY SURGERY	OBR	NHS MERTON CCG	81.35	●	104	89.14	●	105	78.42	●	98	84.15	●	100	84.58	●	98	87.35	●	100	86.34	●	100	81.05	●	100	22
H85078	GRAHAM ROAD SURGERY	OBR	NHS MERTON CCG	82.80	●	49	93.73	●	49	79.74	●	45	91.11	●	48	84.22	●	46	85.26	●	48	86.28	●	48	66.64	●	49	23
H85072	JAMES O'RIORDAN MEDICAL CENTRE	OBR	NHS MERTON CCG	88.44	●	95	97.40	●	95	76.42	●	94	90.98	●	93	71.09	●	82	88.57	●	92	88.16	●	93	84.76	●	93	22
H85649	COLLIERS WOOD SURGERY	OBR	NHS MERTON CCG	58.29	●	167	87.48	●	167	63.50	●	157	83.47	●	161	80.64	●	154	69.61	●	164	69.26	●	162	59.18	●	161	18
H85092	RIVERHOUSE MEDICAL PRACTICE	OBR	NHS MERTON CCG	74.98	●	87	74.16	●	87	68.82	●	83	92.00	●	86	75.51	●	80	58.82	●	86	83.92	●	87	77.30	●	87	19
H85034	PEPYS ROAD SURGERY	OBR	NHS MERTON CCG																									
H85038	CRICKET GREEN MEDICAL PRACTICE	OBR	NHS MERTON CCG	57.02	●	139	78.98	●	138	53.37	●	128	88.49	●	135	81.32	●	127	77.29	●	139	72.64	●	138	64.53	●	139	20
H85035	ROWANS SURGERY	OBR	NHS MERTON CCG	34.90	●	136	83.96	●	139	45.69	●	132	87.41	●	132	80.57	●	130	65.09	●	136	73.84	●	136	65.17	●	135	17
H85656	ALEXANDRA SURGERY	OBR	NHS MERTON CCG	82.05	●	93	90.77	●	93	72.72	●	87	84.21	●	88	77.46	●	85	77.29	●	92	78.43	●	91	69.07	●	92	22
H85020	THE CHURCH LANE PRACTICE	OBR	NHS MERTON CCG	69.51	●	241	92.03	●	241	86.11	●	238	95.15	●	240	81.10	●	233	74.96	●	234	89.86	●	239	91.49	●	240	24
H85110	RAVENSBURY PARK MEDICAL CENTRE	OBR	NHS MERTON CCG	59.76	●	72	80.39	●	72	57.10	●	67	91.65	●	68	73.02	●	66	92.61	●	71	76.93	●	71	67.74	●	71	21
H85024	THE MITCHAM MEDICAL CENTRE.	OBR	NHS MERTON CCG	38.13	●	167	60.82	●	166	45.28	●	160	82.87	●	161	78.10	●	148	57.01	●	163	56.76	●	163	44.35	●	165	7
H85090	FIGGES MARSH SURGERY	OBR	NHS MERTON CCG	44.69	●	103	77.24	●	103	56.98	●	99	75.94	●	99	74.60	●	90	73.83	●	100	67.81	●	97	52.04	●	98	13
H85112	THE VINEYARD HILL ROAD SURGERY	OBR	NHS MERTON CCG	81.96	●	80	87.57	●	80	82.05	●	78	96.65	●	79	82.01	●	74	67.88	●	81	93.50	●	81	94.05	●	81	23
H85026	FRANCIS GROVE SURGERY	OBR	NHS MERTON CCG	51.65	●	174	89.11	●	172	62.20	●	165	90.04	●	168	87.23	●	172	68.26	●	172	80.50	●	172	80.05	●	175	22
Y02968	GP LED HEALTH CENTRE	OBR	NHS MERTON CCG	69.79	●	76	81.86	●	76	74.72	●	73	91.93	●	73	79.32	●	67	90.17	●	73	77.05	●	73	73.28	●	72	24
H85037	MORDEN HALL MEDICAL CENTRE	OBR	NHS MERTON CCG	43.33	●	215	84.47	●	213	62.40	●	211	90.34	●	209	88.02	●	205	73.58	●	213	85.29	●	213	77.47	●	213	22
H85634	THE MERTON MEDICAL PRACTICE	OBR	NHS MERTON CCG	73.50	●	107	85.42	●	107	76.57	●	102	88.03	●	102	80.22	●	100	83.06	●	106	81.39	●	106	78.62	●	107	24

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