

LONDON BOROUGH OF MERTON	
	<u>NOTES OF MEETING</u>
	Subject: Morden Community Forum
	Date: 9th October 2014 Time: 19.15
Action Needed By:	
	<p>1. <u>Welcome and Introductions</u></p> <p>1.1 Cllr. Philip Jones introduced himself as the new Chair of the Morden Community Forum and welcomed all to the meeting, including newly-elected councillors for Morden.</p> <p>1.2 Approximately 22 residents attended, as well as 12 Councillors, and officers from the council and its partners, including police officers for Morden.</p>
	<p>2. <u>Update on Travellers</u></p> <p>2.1 Following a request from Councillor Sally Kenny for an update on the travellers located on Cannon Hill and Morden Parks, a statement was read out from Jacquie Denton, the Principal Estate Surveyor at Merton Council: "The travellers moved off Morden Park on the evening of Wednesday 8 October, however 7 caravans remained on the adjoining car park. The police have advised that these remaining caravans have now moved from the car park and have left the borough."</p> <p>2.2 Sergeant Steven Dorrington commented that moving the travellers on and preventing their return is a difficult matter. Under Section 61 of the Criminal Justice Act, an order can be given to the travellers, dictating that they leave within a given time frame, but this does not prevent them from returning at a later date.</p> <p>2.3 Councillor Kenny suggested council officers and members set up a working group to look at how the issue might be dealt with in future.</p>
	<p>3. <u>Police Update</u></p> <p>3.1 Sergeant Dorrington attended the forum with a number of his team to provide an update on priorities for the Morden area, which focused around additional patrols and problem-solving activity.</p> <p>3.2 There are five ASB priorities that the Morden team is focusing on: drug-taking in Morden Park; a person who is living in a tent in Morden Park; an attempted break-in of the caretaker's shed at the Sir Joseph Hood Memorial playing fields; scramble bikes in Ravensbury Park; and drug-use in Mostyn Gardens.</p> <p>3.3 Crime figures by postcode can be seen by visiting the Met Polive website at http://content.met.police.uk/Page/YourBorough.</p>

	<p>3.4 Sgt Dorrington informed residents that there is no plans to move PCSO Michelle Cooper away from St Helier.</p>
	<p>4. <u>Ask the Leader and budget update – Councillor Stephen Alambritis</u></p> <p>4.1 Leader of the Council, Stephen Alambritis, gave an overview of the council's budget, explaining that proposed spending for the coming year is the equivalent to income, therefore the budget is balanced and the council is financially sound. Additionally, the General Purposes Committee, which scrutinises the council's budget, and external auditors Ernst and Young have both given it a clean bill of health.</p> <p>4.2 Council Tax was frozen for the last four years and will continue to be frozen for the next four. Central Government cuts to funding for Council Tax Support have also been absorbed by the council so that those on benefits are not affected.</p> <p>4.3 The council has £18m in reserves, which is in line with other councils. There is another £49m in allocated reserves which covers things such as school expansions and PFIs</p> <p>4.4 Whilst discretionary funding from Central Government has decreased, council tax revenue is around £75m and has been frozen at £75m. Figures relating to the Council's accounts can be seen at http://democracy.merton.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=136&MId=1965&Ver=4. Some money is also coming in from developers.</p> <p>4.5 The council's pension is 89% fully funded and is the 9th best in the country, which is positive in terms of financial management and good for council employees.</p> <p>4.6 The council is trying to make savings by sharing services with other local authorities, for example Legal Services are now shared with Richmond, Sutton and Kingston, saving the four boroughs about £600,000 over four years.</p> <p>4.7 Further savings have been made through volunteers; all of Merton's libraries remain open and with extended opening hours thanks to volunteers.</p> <p>4.8 Asked about business rates and whether some of the money received from these rates can be ploughed back into struggling businesses, Councillor Alambritis explained that income from business rates is used to pay for the services the council provides to residents. There are small businesses schemes such as a £1,000 discount on rates. Small businesses can also apply for hardship relief, which waives business rates for a year.</p>
	<p>5. <u>Morden Leisure Centre</u></p> <p>5.1 Christine Parsloe, the Leisure and Culture Development</p>

Manager, at Merton Council provided an update on the proposed new Leisure Centre for Morden.

5.2 A number of facilities will definitely be included in the plans, based on recommendations by Sports England: a 6-lane pool; a secondary teaching pool; a hall with four badminton courts/one basketball court; exercise studios; and a 100-station gym.

5.3 There is a £10m budget for the build. Public consultation on which specific facilities some of this money should be spent on has been undertaken and the results showed that the majority would like: a café; a movable floor in the pool to allow for diving to continue; extra lanes in the pool; a climbing wall; a sauna; a crèche. It may not be possible to provide all of these with the £10m but the council will provide as much as the money will allow.

5.4 A series of decisions now need to be made by Cabinet; the first of which – in November this year - will be on the location of the new centre within Morden Park, as well as to tie up the project brief and formally accept the findings of the public consultation.

5.5 A number of specialist consultants will need to be employed to carry out surveys and provide reports on matters such as ecology.

5.6 The aim is for the new centre to open towards the end of 2017/beginning of 2018. Build time is roughly 12-18 months.

5.7 Consultation with stakeholders and other groups is on-going. Regular updates will be provided to the public.

5.8 Christine Parsloe said that the council would work together with the Community Trust in relation to proposals that have come forward regarding the sports fields.

5.9 The park is a conservation area, therefore if the new centre is built on a different part of the park, the land that the existing centre is on would need to be returned to open space.

5.10 GLL will continue to run the new leisure centre once built, and this has been written into their contract with the council.

5.11 It is unusual to receive grants or extra funding for installation of gym equipment.

5.12 The new building will be designed as flexibly as possible so that if extra funds are received, new facilities could be added.

5.13 The existing leisure centres at Canons and Wimbledon already have solar panels on the roofs and the new centre will also be energy efficient, although it has not yet been determined what

	<p>type of energy efficiency mechanism will be used.</p> <p>5.14 Residents will be able to continue to pay and play for facilities at the new centre without needing membership.</p>
	<p>6. <u>Tramlink extension</u></p> <p>6.1 Richard Lancaster, the Future Merton programme manager, gave a presentation on the consultation carried out on proposals to extend the Tramlink from Wimbledon to Sutton via Morden. http://www.merton.gov.uk/tramlink_wimbledon_community_form_presentation_sept_2014.pdf</p> <p>6.2 The majority of the funding for the extension will come from Transport for London. Any contribution from the local boroughs would be low, and proportionally Sutton would pay the larger share of costs.</p> <p>6.3 It is anticipated that the council will be asked to carry out more work on the development side of the project over the next 6-12 months, therefore any decision would be unlikely to clash with the May elections.</p> <p>6.4 Environmental issues around Nursery Road revolve around trams going through an open space; however this is not a favoured option – only 4% of respondents to the consultation preferred it. Overall support for a new tram line favours a line that includes St Helier hospital, with less support for a South Wimbledon extension.</p> <p>6.5 If the tram extension goes ahead, bus routes would probably be altered, or some would be replaced by trams. It is still to be determined where exactly the stop in Morden would be but it would be roughly a three to four-minute walk from the tube station.</p> <p>6.6 It was acknowledged that the tram crossing in Kingston Road is already a challenge and that there is no easy solution to the matter.</p> <p>6.7 Merton is querying the Mayor’s Draft Infrastructure Plan which supports the extension taking place in the early 2030s, although other indications have suggested it would take place in the early 2020s.</p> <p>6.8 The regeneration of Morden Town Centre is likely to take place before the tramlink extension, but the council will factor the extension into the design and planning of the town centre.</p>
	<p>7. <u>Safer Merton consultation</u></p> <p>7.1 Ian Callaghan, Strategic Data Analyst, explained that Safer Merton is carrying out its annual Strategic Assessment which looks at all community safety issues in the borough. The survey will run until the end of October; anyone living and/or working in the borough is encouraged to fill it in at https://consult.merton.gov.uk/KMS/elab.aspx?noip=1&CampaignId=</p>

IC	<p>492&SessionId=H8SUWY5GDX</p> <p>7.2 The Commissioner of the Met Police is coming to Merton on 10 November, between 6.30-7.30pm. Everyone is welcome to attend. The meeting will take place in the Council Chamber.</p> <p>7.3 Merton has one non-alcohol related ASB dispersal order in place and can introduce others if there is sufficient evidence that they are needed. It usually takes approximately six weeks to implement a dispersal order; they are closed if they are no longer deemed necessary.</p> <p>7.4 Ian Callaghan was asked if there is still a dispersal order in place in Morden Town Centre and has reported back that there currently is only one dispersal zone in operation, which is in North Mitcham. Dispersal zones in operation are listed on the following page on the council website: http://www.merton.gov.uk/community-living/communitysafety/safermertonmyneighbourhood/safermertonantisocialbehaviour/safermertondispersalarea.htm. The Morden dispersal zone last ran between 2nd Oct 2013 to 1st April 2014, at which point it was decided not to renew it.</p>
SA	<p>8. Soapbox</p> <p>8.1 Richard Lancaster explained that the guard rails have been removed from Morden Town Centre as research has shown that they actually encourage vehicles to travel faster. Removing them is now common practice in town centres. There will be a period of monitoring the impact, but the indications are that this practice makes vehicles and pedestrians more aware of one another.</p> <p>8.2 There are two councillors from Merton who sit on the board of Circle Housing (formerly Merton Priory Homes). It was acknowledged that tenants are unhappy with Circle Housing; as a result, Councillor Alambritis is scheduled to meet with senior heads there to discuss the problems. In the meantime, a fast-track monitoring system has been put in place for councillors to deal with residents' concerns regarding the registered provider.</p> <p>8.3 Concerns were expressed regarding the appearance of wood chippings in Morden Park. There was a debate about their appearance. Was it fly tipping or was it part of a recognised process? Cllr Alambritis is to clarify the position.</p> <p>8.4 Date of next meeting: 24 March 2015.</p>

This page is intentionally left blank