

Merton Council Council

7 February 2018

Supplementary agenda 2

9	Morden Community Forum	1 - 8
9a	Mitcham Community Forum	9 - 12

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LONDON BOROUGH OF MERTON	
	<u>NOTES OF MEETING</u>
	Subject: Morden Community Forum
	Date: 24th January 2018 Time: 19.15
Action Needed By:	
	<p>1. <u>Welcome and Introductions</u></p> <p>1.1 Cllr. Philip Jones welcomed everybody to the meeting.</p> <p>1.2 Approximately 24 residents attended, as well as 6 councillors, and officers from the council and its partners.</p>
	<p>2. <u>Leonie Cooper – London Assembly Member for Merton and Wandsworth</u></p> <p>2.1 Leonie Cooper gave an update on her work for the London Assembly – a scrutiny body, holding the Mayor to account - where she acts as a representative for Londoners and is the Chair of the Environment Committee. She also sits on the Housing Committee, which looks at how the Mayor’s housing plans will be rolled out, and on the Budget and Performance Committee.</p> <p>2.2 Ms Cooper explained that individual investigations can be carried out by the Assembly, called ‘rapporteurships’. She has just completed one on biodiversity in the Mayor’s new housing developments, to ensure that biodiversity is included in new developments. Many of the recommendations from the investigation were approved e.g. an ‘urban greening factor’, which ensures some green space in all developments.</p> <p>2.3 Most of the work that is completed through the Assembly’s scrutiny committees results in a letter and recommendations to the Mayor, who must respond to any recommendations within a certain timeframe.</p> <p>2.4 The Mayor and other stakeholders can also be summonsed by the Assembly to answer questions about subjects the Assembly is investigating, e.g. the previous Mayor, Boris Johnson, has been summonsed by the Oversight Committee to answer questions about the scrapped Garden Bridge project, on which £40m was spent. Members of the public can sit in the public gallery to listen to this.</p> <p>2.5 A report into plastic bottles was completed by the Assembly’s Environment committee and sent to the Mayor, who has now put £750,000 aside in his draft budget to address the environmental issue of plastic bottles.</p>

LC	<p>2.6 A resident asked if the Mayor could require that take-away restaurants stop using plastic and polystyrene containers and install more water fountains in London. Ms Cooper said that these matters are being considered in the Mayor’s draft environment strategy and water refill stations were recommended in her biodiversity report. There is a plan to install these in public transport stations. Meanwhile, scientific research is being done into alternative packaging to plastic and there will hopefully be a big movement around what happens about the use of plastic as a whole – in supermarket products, water bottles and take-aways. However, it is a complex area.</p> <p>2.7 Councillor Peter Southgate asked how the 223% increase in housing that London is expected to provide could be reconciled with the need to ensure green space. Ms Cooper explained that if density is going to be increased, transport connections will also need to be improved, and then densification could be carried out around the transport hubs, to allow for good growth and to protect parks and open spaces. She suggested TfL could include more greenery in their transport plans too and that biodiversity needs to be made as strong as possible in the London Plan.</p> <p>2.8 A resident asked how pressures on public transport, through densification and intensification, will be dealt with. Ms Cooper explained that it is being explored to see if trains can run more frequently, and that she felt it is important that Crossrail 2 takes place. Bus frequency could also be increased, along with cycle lanes.</p> <p>2.9 A resident stated that TfL’s ownership of many buildings in Morden meant that it was difficult to address certain problems, such as parking and maintaining buildings, and asked if Ms Cooper could assist in talking to TfL about such issues. Ms Cooper explained that these matters are a priority and she can put them to TfL; however, TfL take a long time to reply, even to Assembly Members, and they do not always give the reply hoped for, for example on parking spaces. Ms Cooper undertook to raise new concerns from residents with TfL, including concern about an unused shop in TfL’s Morden station building.</p> <p>2.10 Paul McGarry from futureMerton expressed concern that the water bill for installing water refill stations could be high for councils. He suggested that City Hall might use its leverage with Thames Water to ensure the water from the fountains is free. Ms Cooper replied that she is hopeful Thames Water will allow for free water fountains, which she felt Londoners deserve.</p>
	<p>3. <u>Morden Leisure Centre update</u> 3.1 Christine Parsloe, Leisure & Culture Development Manager at the council, gave a presentation, updating residents on the new</p>

	<p>leisure centre development, which is both on budget and on time.</p> <p>3.2 A resident asked, if the drainage is not yet in, how the pool, which has been filled with water to test it, would be emptied for tiling. Chris Parsloe explained that the water would be moved to the secondary pool so that the main pool could be tiled. Then the reverse will take place. By then, the drains will be in so the water will be drained.</p> <p>3.3 In response to a resident asking if the café be dog-friendly, Chris Parsloe explained that the café will have an outside seating area for dog owners and their dogs to sit. Café users will not have to pay to enter.</p>
	<p>4. <u>Changes to waste collection</u></p> <p>4.1 Jeremy Gibson, a Neighbourhood Client officer gave a presentation on the changes to waste collection that are to be rolled out across the borough for October. Also present to answer questions were: Claire Secord, Neighbourhood Client Officer; Charlie Baker, Waste Strategy and Commissioning Manager; Will Graham from Veolia; and Graeme Kane Assistant Director Public Space, Contracting and Commissioning.</p> <p>4.2 A resident expressed scepticism over recycling rates going up, questioning whether having to sort waste into many more containers will put people off recycling. Will Graham from Veolia said that recycling in Sutton has gone up by 17% in nine months since the new waste collection system has been introduced in the borough. Going fortnightly has been proven to improve recycling.</p> <p>4.3 Asked whether the bin men will return emptied bins to their correct place, the team said that talks on bin presentation will be given regularly to the waste operatives, to highlight the importance of returning bins to their correct place.</p> <p>4.4 In response to a question about how people who don't have space for bins and/or can't physically move them will be accommodated, Charlie Baker explained that the presentation given at the forum was based on a standard service for the borough, but assisted collections for households that cannot manage wheelie bins will still be provided where appropriate. Furthermore, a policy on exemptions for wheelie bins based on house type will be drawn up.</p> <p>4.5 A resident asked how the new process will be cleaner with fortnightly collections, as it means rubbish bags will be outside for longer. Jeremy Gibson explained that bags will be contained in wheelie bins, with a smaller proportion of residents not using wheelies. Will Graham added that the service for flats – which are not served by wheelie bins - will remain weekly.</p>

4.6 A resident expressed concerns about nappies if collections are changing to fortnightly, as these will now need to be wrapped in even more plastic bags. Graeme Kane agreed that this is a disadvantage of the new system, but overall the process will be cleaner.

4.7 Asked if there would be changes in street sweeping as this is currently a problem in Merton, Will Graham said that street cleansing is carried out based on need. Outside of the town centres, streets are visited, on average, fortnightly, but some are visited more often and some less.

4.8 Councillor Curtin thanked Veolia for their excellent service in picking up Christmas trees this year.

4.9 Councillor Southgate said most people in Merton Park already have wheelie bins and asked if a waterproof sticker could be placed on them to identify them as Merton bins, rather than them being thrown away when the new bins are introduced. Will Graham said that standardisation is required so residents' existing bins cannot be used for the new service, but residents would be encouraged to reuse their bins for other purposes.

4.10 A resident expressed concerns about security, commenting that if bins are left outside on paths all day, it would highlight if a property is empty. Charlie Baker said that the proposal is for bins to be left at the edge of the property, not on pavements, therefore there should not be visible signs that a property may be empty.

4.11 A resident questioned whether lidless boxes for recycling paper and cardboard were appropriate as the contents could be spoiled in the rain. Will Graham said that the quality of paper that can be delivered, even when exposed to the elements, is still high and Veolia are confident that they would be able to get a rebate for it.

4.12 A resident expressed concern about the change in collections from weekly to fortnightly and about more plastic being used with the introduction of plastic wheelie bins. He asked if the new system has been trialled in the borough to gauge residents' reactions. Graeme Kane explained that wheelie bin usage is common throughout the UK and is safer, cleaner and cheaper to operate. Results have proven that people adapt to it and whilst there is an embedded carbon factor in the wheelie bins, they will last decades, so a lot of use will be gotten out of them. Charlie Baker added that the methodology was trialled in Lavender Fields in 2015 and it showed an increase in recycling as well as improvements in the cleanliness of streets. Leonie Cooper added that the London Assembly's Environment Committee has looked at all of the

	<p>collection methodologies across the whole of London and it's been shown that if people start to separate their food waste, they generally start to reduce the amount of waste they produce.</p> <p>4.13 A resident asked that the council reconsider the recycling container for paper and card, as contents may blow out of a lidless container. Graeme Kane explained that plastic can also blow out, so a balance is being sought. The resident also commended the council on its educational campaign on recycling.</p> <p>4.14 A resident stated concern about the choice of colour and size of wheelie bins, suggesting that households be able to choose the size of bin they need. Graeme Kane said that the colour of the bin will be grey-black, but with different lid colours to help residents identify which bin to use. Standard bins will be 180l, but after a certain trial period, residents will be able to request a slimmer one of 140l if they prefer, or increase to a 240l if they have a larger household and meet the Council's criteria for a bigger bin.</p>
	<p>5. <u>Morden Regeneration</u></p> <p>5.1 Paul McGarry, the Head of futureMerton, Kate O'Donnell, Regeneration Planner, and Eben van der Westhuizen, Policy Planner, gave an update on the Morden Regeneration plans, the Local Plan and TfL funding bids.</p> <p>5.2 Many consultations on the regeneration of Morden have taken place over the years and the intention is to make more of the town, as currently, the town centre offer does not match the demographics and what people want; it is tired and needs investment.</p> <p>5.3 There is also a requirement to provide more housing – the first and second rungs of the housing ladder (flats) are missing, and the council believes that the town centre can accommodate this. This would have the added benefit of helping businesses in Morden as there'll be more footfall and customers.</p> <p>5.4 A number of projects are being worked on with TfL, looking at a range of topics including regenerating the town centre and air quality.</p> <p>5.5 A consultation was recently carried out on a new Local Plan to replace the 2011 plan. In response to the consultation, close to 1,100 responses were received, with 156 of these being in relation to Morden, raising questions about traffic, the location of bus stops, modernisation, shops, businesses and restaurants, improving the public realm and making the town centre more attractive. These responses will now all be collated before another consultation will take place on an updated draft of the Local Plan.</p>

5.6 The futureMerton team has been working closely with TfL and other partners to look at how to explore opportunities to work together. The market has been tested to see if developers are interested in the town centre, as a development partner is needed. A report went to Scrutiny and then to [Cabinet](#) on 15 January 2018. The Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel recognised that there are opportunities in Morden but recommended to Cabinet that the Council should retain an appropriate amount of control of any development. The next steps between now and Autumn 2018, when procurement for a development partner will begin, are due diligence, research into what is needed and entering into negotiations with TfL.

5.7 The council has been applying for funding bids to help to make the regeneration happen. There have been some successes, e.g. £260,000 was granted by the Cabinet Office to look at how more housing developments can be brought to the town centre. This funding will be received in March 2018. Another bid has been put in for the Planning Delivery Fund, to speed up building houses and the delivery of Morden's regeneration. A decision on this is being awaited. A bid was also put in for the Housing Infrastructure Fund – the government is to decide on whether to grant Morden this money. A decision on this is due in March.

5.8 £300,000 has been granted to the council by TfL to look at streets and public spaces and how the town centre's roads and high street can be improved (as part of the 'Healthy Streets' project). This is a three-year project; consultation on street designs will take place soon.

5.9 Morden Court Parade has been improved with the aid of a grant from the Mayor of London's regeneration team. This council-led project has just been nominated for a RIBA award that recognises 'architecture for the common good'.

5.10 Further information is available on the [More Morden](#) website.

5.11 A resident asked what the short-term plan is to improve the town centre and high street, and if any help is available for local businesses. Paul McGarry explained that there is council support for helping businesses and that the council will champion small improvements in the town; however, the roads belong to TfL. He acknowledged that there is frustration for the shops situated by the station, as the building is owned by TfL. Similarly, many shops in Morden are sub-leased, but the council can regain control of these as the regeneration project moves forward.

5.12 Councillor Alambritis thanked futureMerton for its work to improve Morden. He reassured local businesses that they are

	<p>appreciated and the council wishes them to prosper in Morden. He then asked if the council is working with the National Trust as well, in order to engage Morden Hall Park in regeneration plans. He also said he would like the council to re-introduce public toilets to Morden Town Centre as part of any regeneration. Paul McGarry said that all major new developments should have public toilets, according to the new Draft London Plan, so this would happen. FutureMerton does engage with the National Trust, which is also looking at improvements. There is a listed wall, which has to be kept, but work is being done to look at opening the park up more.</p> <p>5.13 A business owner asked how Abbotsbury Road would be affected and expressed concern about being pushed out by the regeneration. Paul McGarry said there were no plans currently as there is no development partner. Many businesses there still have five-year leases, which would mean that imminent change on Abbotsbury Road would be unlikely. The council would like to keep its businesses and support them, so would be working alongside them.</p> <p>5.14 Asked about timescales for the regeneration plan, Paul McGarry said that the project began in 2008, but halted when the economy collapsed. It has now been resumed but will take time – perhaps an eight-year project, aiming at about 2026. The Healthy Streets project, however, is a three-year project, so would be rolled out in about 2021.</p> <p>5.15 Asked how a better mix of shops would be attracted to Morden, Paul explained that currently not much can be done about which businesses are here as the council does not own the land, but moving forward, it can promote better shops and businesses in its plans. Publicising the local economic market to businesses and promotion of the demographics/spending power will be done.</p> <p>5.16 A resident voiced concern about ‘retail gentrification’ and protecting some of the existing shops, which serve the needs of people on lower incomes. Paul McGarry acknowledged that there needs to be a mix and a balance needs to be sought through work with a development partner. Research is being carried out, for example, on whether an affordable business space policy could be introduced.</p>
	<p>6. <u>Soapbox</u></p> <p>6.1 A resident raised concerns about bike and motorbike safety in the borough with respect to the speeds they travel at and the impact upon pedestrians and drivers. He asked whether high-viz clothing could be enforced and asked Leonie Cooper about whether anything could be done. Ms Cooper said that it was critical to train people to ride safely and to educate people to use the roads safely.</p>

LC	She said that cycling proficiency and then refreshers should be encouraged more and that ensuring people were properly clad and using lights should be encouraged. She offered to take feedback to the transport committee on the matter of cycling safely.
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Mitcham Community Forum
23 January 2018
Chair's Report

The meeting was held at Mitcham Library, and chaired by Councillor Ian Munn. 30 residents attended, as well as two other Councillors, and officers of the council and its partners. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Changes to Waste Collection services

Jeremy Gibson, Claire Secord, Neighbourhood Client Officers, and Graeme Kane, Assistant Director of Public Space, from Merton Council were joined by Will Graham from Veolia to set out the changes to waste collection services that will occur in October 2018. The presentation that gave can be found at: <https://www.merton.gov.uk/council-and-local-democracy/community-forums/mitcham-community-forum>

Will Graham explained that having the delivered the same package in Sutton it has become apparent that higher capacity is needed for plastic, glass, cans and cartons than for paper and card. As a result, consideration is being given to swapping the containers so that paper/card would remain in the existing boxes and other materials would be in the new wheelie bin.

Residents made a number of comments and questions and these are summarised below along with the response from the team.

Issue	Response
Current bins used by residents will not be removed by Merton	Wheelie bins previously purchased by residents will not fit the new vehicles so will need to be replaced. If residents cannot find new use they can be brought to Garth Road.
How should waste be presented currently	Current service is black sack; sacks should be presented on the edge of your property by 6am on morning of collection, except where other arrangements in place. Removing sacks from bins presents a safety risk to staff.
Lids for boxes	Existing boxes will be retained but new boxes in the future may be provided with lids.
Penalties for failing to recycle	Merton does not penalise residents for failing to recycle and has no plans to do so. Support and advice is available to help residents recycle more.
Problems getting through to Merton Council to order replacement or new equipment	Apologies for the difficulties causes. Details were taken away to help resolve the issue.
Recycling arrangements in flats	The current systems in place will remain.
Is collection of communal bins tracked?	Vehicle movements are all tracked but not the actual collection of the bins.
Food waste bins have been opened by animals	The boxes should be fairly robust, certainly compared to black sacks

Issue	Response
Redesigning of front gardens to accommodate new wheelies	We expect most households will have space but work is underway to assess which households can accommodate the new bins, which can accommodate some of the new services and which will need an alternative arrangement. This will be completed and reviewed in plenty of time for the new service.
How will the changes be communicated?	Leaflets will be delivered to each household with clear description of the changes and a calendar of collections.
What help is there for people who will struggle with the new bins?	The assisted collection service that is already provided will continue. More information is available at https://www.merton.gov.uk/rubbish-and-recycling/bins-bags-and-collection-services/putting-out-your-rubbish-and-recycling-for-collection
Will the new bins block pavements, especially where they are narrow?	Bins should be presented at the boundary of your property and should be returned there by the collection crews. If crews are continually failing to do this please report so additional training can be provided.
Does there need to be a black sack in for rubbish in the new wheelie bins?	This is up to residents, the contents will be collected regardless.
Will overspill from the wheelie bins be collected?	In the early weeks of the new service there will be an amnesty but after that the 180l capacity will be the maximum that will be collected.
What is the cost saving for Merton?	Officers were not able to give a specific figure but it was reported to Cabinet in July 2016 that the new contract would potentially result in revenue savings of up to £1.3m in year and up to £2.2m per annum from year 2.
Why does paper/card need to be collected separately from other recyclables.	Keeping paper dry and separate from other contaminants means paper can be sold at £70 per tonne. Otherwise it would cost £30 per tonne to dispose of.

A number of residents also wanted to raise specific issues about street cleaning. Details were taken outside the meeting.

Rediscover Mitcham update

James Geeson from the Future Merton team, Merton Council, updated the meeting on the works in Mitcham Town Centre. The project is nearly completed with only a few minor works to be completed. All the roads and signals are finished but teams are still on site to resolve snagging issues, complete furnishings, bollards, signage, and cycle stands. Data from the new signals is being analysed and the system will learn how to improve traffic flows. There will also be a review after six months of the whole scheme.

Residents had asked about the junction at St Marks Road, James explained that it was not planned to install a yellow box, they are expensive and often unwelcome because of the

penalty notices they generate. The junction will be monitored and this decision could be reconsidered. Traffic on Commonsides West was also raised. This is historically the most congested route into the town centre and has been difficult to tackle through this scheme. At the moment the works on Beddington Lane is making the issue worse but it will continue to be monitored.

A resident said Western Road was worse, but Church Road has improved. James said bus companies had reported improved times, but with the signal lights still learning improvements should be expected. Residents also reported issues with buses blocking London Road turning into Raleigh Gardens. James said this has been raised with the bus companies already but is happy to reinforce the need for drivers to obey the rules. James said they would review if there is a need for a yellow box was needed at the Morrison's car park exit.

James was asked if the green space was finished and if plans were in hand to honour the commitment to list them as a Town Greens. The works are not yet complete, better quality landscaping is needed to repair the damage done but construction works. James will check with colleagues on the Town Green process. James also said other colleagues are working on plans to encourage activity in the town centre and details can be shared with the Forum.

A resident asked about signal timing and if the focus could be shifted to pedestrians over vehicles. James said timings on signals conformed to national standards to be safe for pedestrians. The junction at Western Way by Lidl was too big for an all-stop diagonal crossing and Transport for London would not agree to such a long all-stop on a strategic road.

Residents raised concerns about the curbs in the staggered pedestrian crossings. James said the curbs were necessary to assist pedestrians with a visual impairment, but stone colour had been changed to improve the contrast of the curb. James also explained that it was not possible to have a speed limit lower than 20 mph on the perimeter road but additional signage would be installed. When asked about the budget James said that the original budget was £6.2m; the cost estimate of the detailed design was £6.9m and the final cost is likely to be around £7.2m. Final invoices from contractors should be submitted shortly and included in the Council accounts for 2017/18.

London Fire Brigade will be asked by Kris Witherington for an update on the old fire station.

Merton's Local Plan

Tony Burton from Mitcham Cricket Green Community and Heritage provide an update on the work the group has done to respond to the recent consultation on Merton's Local Plan. Tony's presentation is available at:

<https://www.merton.gov.uk/council-and-local-democracy/community-forums/mitcham-community-forum>

The Local Plan is important setting out the future development of Merton and local planning priorities. The group has identified 14 development sites around the Cricket Green area as well as 13 assets of community value. Tony also highlighted the huge potential of the Benedict Wharf site after it closes in 2019.

Tony said he expected Merton Council to report back on the responses to the consultation in the spring before the next phase, a consultation on an Issues and Options scheme in the autumn.

Councillor Munn informed residents Merton Council was also consulting on a Development Viability Supplementary Planning Guidance. When developers apply for planning permission, they must provide an appraisal of the financial viability of their development if they want to justify why their particular scheme cannot afford to meet all the council's planning policies and still remain economically viable. More information can be found at: <https://www2.merton.gov.uk/environment/planning/planningpolicy/spg/Development-viability-and-validation-checklist.htm>

Tony was asked about the Burn Bullock and replied that the owner had put forward plans for pre-application advice but having been told the plans were not suitable there had been no further contact. This is an important site with an opportunity to secure the future of the Cricket Pavilion so it is disappointing the owner refuses to engage with the community.

Tony also said that the Council had recently agreed that £5000 of Neighbourhood Fund money be made available for each ward to spend on small improvements to public space. This is due to be done in consultation with councillors but it is not clear yet how residents can get involved in the deciding how the money is spent. In the short term you could contact your local councillors with ideas.

Soapbox

A resident raised concern about the same graffiti tag appearing throughout Mitcham, Morden and Tooting. Graffiti can be reported online at www.merton.gov.uk and can be raised with local police Safer Neighbourhood Teams.

The role of Merton's new Housing Company was raised. Plans including the possible development of some of the car parks in Mitcham. Residents felt that as a principle development on Council owned land should be for affordable housing. Meetings of the Company Board are held in public and residents are welcome to attend.

Nell Allen asked residents to consider a motion to the Council that had previously been agreed at Wimbledon and Raynes Park Community Forums. The motion reads:

"We the attendees of the (Mitcham/Morden) Community Forum, request that Merton Council's Cabinet make time to discuss the following motion with Veolia's Merton Managers...

"ALL MERTON'S FUTURE WASTE BIN AND RECYCLING BOX PURCHASES SHOULD BE BROWN IN COLOUR (to match the food and garden waste bins), FREE FROM LBM LOGOS, WITH A SIMPLE SYMBOL FOR WASTE OR RECYCLING ON THE LID, IN BLACK (less conspicuous than white) - MAKING UNOBTRUSIVENESS A PRIORITY."

There was a clear majority of residents in attendance in favour of this motion being brought to the Council meeting on 7 February.

Councillor Munn thanked residents for attending and closed the meeting.

Date of next meeting: Wednesday 17 October at 7.15pm, in Mitcham Library