

Merton Council Council

7 February 2018

Supplementary Agenda

26 Supplementary Questions and Replies

1 - 46

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1. Derek Manning

To the Cabinet Member for Finance

What does it say about this council that it is willing to gift MERTON HALL - facility GIFTED TO US by JOHN INNES for use by the entire community - to a church focused on a very narrow section of the community?

Reply

Merton is committed to ensuring children get the best possible education and the upgrading of Merton Hall is a key element in achieving that. We have a statutory duty to ensure there are sufficient school places, and thanks to the success of Merton's good and outstanding schools we have an increasing demand for school places and need a new school. The Council has approached the process in a business-like manner. After much consideration, and consultation with the government's Educations and Skills Funding Agency and the preferred school provider, a site was identified at High Path. However, in order to assemble the site at the lowest possible cost to local council tax payers, it has been necessary to obtain the land from existing owners. Contrary to suggestions, the site at Merton Hall is not being 'gifted'; it is part of a land swap that that is integral to assembling the site. By swapping an upgraded Merton Hall for that land, the council will deliver best value for money and a much-needed new secondary school. All of these matters have been discussed and agreed at public meetings over a long period, most recently at Cabinet in December 2017, and at the subsequent Scrutiny Call-in on of that decision on 10 January. I would urge Mr Manning to review the rationale in the numerous Cabinet papers for more detail, and hope that he will welcome our much-needed new school, which would not be possible without this land swap.

2. From: Portia Dadley

To the Cabinet Member for Community and Culture

Given that this year is the centenary of the Representation of the People Act 1918 and votes for women, what measures is Merton Council taking to celebrate the life and work of Merton suffragette Rose Lamartine Yates, who fought for that ground-breaking legislation?

Reply

Throughout 2018 Merton Heritage Service will be working with local schools, Merton museums, historical societies, community groups and external heritage organisations to run a programme of activities and events, marking the centenary of women's voting rights in the UK. This will include film screenings, exhibitions, heritage trails, craft workshops, oral history and debates. The main commemorative programme will run from May to October and events will be staged at libraries and community venues across the borough to highlight this important historical landmark.

Particular attention will be given to raising awareness of the people, places and events linked to the women's suffrage campaign in Merton, including the work of key individuals such as Josephine Butler, Bertha Lonsignol and Wimbledon WSPU Organising Secretary, Rose Lamartine Yates. Rose will be commemorated through an exhibition at Merton Heritage Centre; a guided walk through Wimbledon and Merton Park; themed class sessions for Merton schools; the naming of a rose (to be planted in John Innes Park) and the re-enactment of a suffragette garden party in the grounds of her former home, Dorset Hall.

**3. From: Sofia Parente
To the Cabinet Member for Education**

Why has Merton's school food provider Chartwells lost Food for Life catering mark accreditation when this was central to the company winning the contract in the first place? How do you ensure the quality and sustainability of school food is maintained? Will you renew their contract?

Reply

Chartwells have not lost catering mark accreditation – the position is that the previous contractor up to summer 2016 had Food for Life gold accreditation which they built up over several years. Chartwells have not reached Food for Life gold accreditation - there is no contractual requirement to do so and it is only one measure in determining the overall quality of the service. To ensure quality the contractor has a detailed specification that we monitor to, and there is a programme of council monitoring visits and regular meetings with the contractor to discuss quality. The contract with Chartwells can be either renewed or extended from 1 September 2019 and the council will make a decision in partnership with schools before the school summer holidays.

**4. From: Andrew Biden
To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration Environment and Housing**

Please provide details of the proposed consultation process (if any) regarding how the s106 monies from the Wimbledon stadium redevelopment will be used to benefit the immediate locality.

Reply

As with all major planning permissions, S106 agreement set out mandatory measures and controls that are required to make the development acceptable in planning terms as approved by Planning Applications Committee at its meeting held on 10 December 2015. A summary of the S106 Heads of Terms can be found in the officer report and minutes and modifications for that committee meeting on the council's website. Improvements to the locality include investment in the roads and pavements, funding for local healthcare, funding for the play facilities nearest the site (Garratt Park). The S106 agreement is published on the council's planning explorer at the following location:

<http://planning.merton.gov.uk/MVM/Online/DMS/DocumentViewer.aspx?pk=1000086992&SearchType=Planning%20Application>

5. From: Hina Bokhari

To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration Environment and Housing

50 years ago, Merton promised Little League's founder that pitch hire would be free for the charity, to allow any child to play for free. Will Merton work with Idverde, who now control Merton's green spaces, to keep Little League free for all and not charge each league £4,000 pa.?

Reply

Given the considerable pressures on local government finances, which affect the London Borough of Merton, the Council have had to reconsider the way in which it funds the services it provides. There is a cost to the Council for the maintenance of sports pitches and our open spaces. Furthermore, the demands of the Little Leagues have grown considerably since they were first founded with more pitches required for longer periods of time. Therefore, the Council has, together with its operational contractor, idverde, reluctantly been forced to review the historical arrangements and not least because the Little Leagues have grown and developed during that time period.

As far as we are aware, Little Leagues around the country pay for the use of the facilities that they enjoy. This is certainly the case in the London Borough of Sutton, for example, with whom we share a grounds maintenance provider and contract. Merton has been able to support these activities for free for several decades now, and not simply by providing free pitches but several other ancillary benefits too: free pavilion hire and utilities, for example.

Many different clubs and groups use our sports pitches for a range of sports. It is important that we are consistent in our charging for the use of sports pitches. There is no other junior sports initiative that has enjoyed the same favourable benefits as the Little Leagues. The introduction of modest charges for the use of pitches puts the Little League on the same arrangement as junior cricket, junior tennis and junior rugby and indeed other junior football initiatives.

The suggested charges are currently the subject of an ongoing discussion with the Little Leagues, but whatever final figure is agreed, it is clear that it will be a very favourable rate that still represents a significant subsidy compared to the overall maintenance costs. Merton remains committed to supporting Little leagues football and will work to ensure the costs reflect value for money in the context of the overall financial challenges we face.

Supplementary

Thank you Madam Mayor and thank you to the Cabinet Member for his answer. Will the Council release details of the contract for our parks to the friends groups to

reassure residents they are not incentivising Idverde to introduce charges like the ones proposed for Little League?

Reply

We don't release the confidential details of contracts but what I will do is I will take that back and find out exactly what we will be doing for you. I'm not going to make any guarantees on the timing. Thank you.

6. Anthony Fairclough

To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration Environment and Housing

Why has Merton not joined other London boroughs in signing up to the new London-wide database of rogue landlords?

Reply

Merton has advised the GLA of its intention to sign up to the new London Wide database of rough Landlords.

7. Barry Smith

To the Cabinet Member for Street Cleanliness and Parking

What action are Merton taking to combat engine idling, and why has Merton not signed up to London-wide initiatives on this that are receiving funding from the Mayor's Air Quality Fund?

Reply

The Council is currently in the process of finalising its new Air Quality Action Plan, as part of this plan there is a strong commitment to tackle the issue of anti-idling in hotspots throughout the borough. As this is a new process we will need a little time to adopt the provisions and determine the enforcement processes within the borough.

There are a number of initiatives that we are reviewing as part of our joined working in London around air quality, however any enforcement plan in Merton needs to be specific to our borough, focused on areas of concern and produce measurable results.

8. From: Somayeh Aghnianejad

To the Cabinet Member for Finance

In the last 3 years, how often have community representatives been invited to participate in the procurement process, both number of occasions and % of council contracts?

Reply

Community representatives have been invited to participate in the procurement process on 11 occasions in the last 3 years. Due to the level of information held on our Contracts Register, we are unable to provide an accurate percentage of Council contracts that this equates to. As outlined in the Procurement Strategy, we will be working closely with departments and providing training to improve the data captured on the Contracts Register.

9. From: Lynne Gordon

To the Cabinet Member for Street Cleanliness and Parking

The area around Wimbledon Library has been plagued with litter problems for a long time now. Can the cabinet member tell me what actions he is taking to address this problem?

Reply

We are aware that there have been particular problems with litter and fly-tipping around the Wimbledon Library. This is a result of a number of issues, many of which relate to the individuals dumping waste in and around the Neighbourhood Recycling Centre at that location as well as next to the Commercial Waste bins. Our Environmental Enforcement Team have been carrying out some investigative work to identify those who are fly-tipping and where possible, issue Fixed Penalty Notices. Meanwhile, our Neighbourhood Client Team has been working to address problems with waste and recycling collections at this site to improve the area.

Supplementary

Thank you to the Cabinet Member for answering the question. It would be very useful if we can have the answers a little earlier so we can actually get back to it. There seems to be a Borough-wide failure in the recycling rubbish and street cleaning, I came here to talk about Hillside but this is a Borough-wide problem. Flytipping would appear to be the symptom rather than the cause. There is definitely inadequacy of rubbish and recycling facilities, inadequate rubbish collection services and a virtual absence of street cleaning. So yes, please pursue flytippers. But I'd like to ask the Cabinet Member, what are they doing about getting effective street cleaning, collection services and getting Veolia to actually adhere to their contract?

Reply

Thank you Ms Gordon for your supplementary question. In terms of what we are doing as a Local Authority; we are closely monitoring the contract with Veolia to make sure that they are delivering on the service that they are being paid to provide. We have instilled penalties against Veolia since the contract started as well as withheld payment from them. In terms of looking forward, from October 2018 we will be making sure that there are adequate facilities in terms of recycling and refuse presentation in the form of wheeled bins.

10. From: Klaartje Dresselaers
To the Cabinet Member for Children's Services

How does Merton assist families of children with SEN, EHCP and physical disabilities to know what support is available to them and access the available support?

Reply

We work hard to assist families of children with SEN, EHCP and physical disabilities and have actively involved children and families in developing our local offer. The offer includes the following:

- 1) We have a local offer that outlines the support and services to children with SEN, EHCP's and Disabilities. This is advertised and promoted by all staff.
- 2) We have a single point of access at SEN@merton.gov.uk where parents can contact SENDIS regarding any queries.
- 3) If the child has or is going through an EHCP the Senior Case Officer allocated provides them with information and guidance regarding their child's individual needs
- 4) We provide training to SENCO's and Head Teachers regarding services for CYP with SEN and Disabilities
- 5) We have a SEND Interventions team who are available to provide time limited support and signposting regarding services and support for CYP with SEN and Disabilities.
- 6) The Head of SENDIS and other members of the SLT meet regularly with Kids First the parent/carer forum regarding support and information available to CYP with SEN and Disabilities.
- 7) Merton has an independent Information and Advice Service (MIAS) who provides advice, guidance and support to parents/carers of children with SEN and Disabilities

We are however not complacent and are currently promoting our offer to ensure all professionals are aware and can signpost parents appropriately. We have recently reviewed the portal with parents to make it more accessible.

11. From: John Tippet-Cooper
To the Cabinet Member for Street Cleanliness and Parking

Will the Council consider the concerns of many Merton residents and, once the new fortnightly waste collection arrangements come into force, provide a weekly collection service for hygiene waste, such as nappies?

Reply

There are currently no plans to introduce a weekly collection of refuse waste for households with hygiene waste. Providing that the waste is appropriately wrapped there are no health issues with this waste been collected on alternate weeks. Larger households with young children will be able to request a larger wheelie bin if required.

The major contributor to the 'smelly waste' is food and as this is collected weekly there are no health concerns with moving to an alternate week collection for the general waste.

Furthermore, we offer residents a dedicated clinical waste service for the safe disposal of used syringes and needles; dressings and surgical waste. Further details are available on our website: <https://www.merton.gov.uk/rubbish-and-recycling/bulky-hazardous-and-clinical-waste/clinical-waste>

Supplementary

Thank you very much Chair. Just to follow on from the question I asked, I know that it is stated that nappies do not constitute smelly waste, that it is in fact food that constitutes that, I doubt that many parents in Merton would necessarily agree with that summary; but can the Council at least agree to explore the costs of either a weekly hygiene waste collection or alternative support for parents who are going to have to store two weeks worth of nappies in their new large wheelie bins?

Reply

I'd like to welcome the Lib Dem Candidate for Dundonald Ward. In terms of our Waste Services we procured it with 3 other Boroughs: Croydon, Sutton and Kingston. I understand that Sutton is run by the Lib Dems and they are currently in the process of having the same system that we will be looking to. So in terms of nappy waste, over three quarters of Local Authorities in the UK actually have a wheeled bin service so this is nothing new that we are introducing here. If it worked for people in Kingston, if it works for people in Sutton if it works for three quarters of Local Authorities across the UK, then I think it will work for Merton.

12. From: Tamara Kohler

To the Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Engagement and Equalities

Merton council reports high levels of satisfaction with its services across the borough, yet the majority of residents need little interaction with the council. What is the satisfaction level with council services amongst residents who have the most frequent contact with the council (e.g. receiving benefits, social care, SEN/EHCP)?

Reply

As part of our resident's survey, respondents are asked, which of a list of services provided locally do they or members of their household use. The list consists of leisure and sports facilities; recycling facilities; libraries; parks, playgrounds and open spaces; nursery education (under 5's) provided by Merton Council; primary

education (5-11's) provided by Merton Council; secondary education (11-18's) provided by Merton Council; and Parking services: resident permits, on street parking and car parks. For most of the service user groups respondents were more or as satisfied with the council when compared to all respondents. The users of leisure and recycling facilities were more satisfied by a statistically significant margin. The results are set out in the table below.

	% using service	Net Satisfied	Net Dissatisfied
Leisure and sports facilities	35%	72%	12%
Recycling facilities	74%	69%	13%
Libraries	40%	69%	12%
Parks, playgrounds and open spaces	79%	67%	14%
Nursery education (under 5's) provided by Merton Council	9%	66%	18%
Primary education (5-11's) provided by Merton Council	13%	74%	9%
Secondary education (11-18's) provided by Merton Council	5%	59%	25%
Parking services: resident permits, on street parking and car parks	51%	68%	13%
All respondents	100%	67%	14%

**13. From: Hayley Ormrod
To the Cabinet Member for Street Cleanliness and Parking**

The streets around where I live and across residential areas of Wimbledon Town Centre are very dirty. During refuse collection Veolia employees tip out waste and leave a stream of it behind them. Lack of leaf collection has left streets/pavements muddy/dirty. What actions is the council taking to address this?

Reply

Our contractor, Veolia is required to maintain the required level of street cleaning across the borough. To achieve this consistent standard of cleansing, Veolia use a number of different methods of cleaning the streets and alter the frequency depending on the footfall and littering of the area concerned. Street operatives conduct manual litter picking and broom sweeping alongside mechanical and electrical sweepers which provide an efficient and effective way to lift litter and detritus from Merton's streets.

Our refuse crew are required to clean up any spillage caused during the collection of waste and each crew is equipped with shovel and brooms. Where problems with spilled waste occur, our contractor carries out further training and guidance for those crew members.

Research carried out by the Tidy Britain Group on behalf of the council, indicated that as much as 50% of all street waste arising in residential roads can be attributed to the black sack and box collection schemes operated within Merton. In October 2018 we will be introducing a wheelie bin collection service which will greatly reduce the level of street blown litter from the boxes and torn black sack waste created by foxes and other animals.

Supplementary

Thank you Madam Mayor and thank you to the Cabinet Member for your response. The problem with street cleaning is that it has got significantly worse since the Lead Cabinet Member handed over service to Veolia; I don't recall streets remotely as filthy before Veolia took over. Collections took place and street cleaners followed the refuse collections on a weekly basis. This doesn't happen anymore. My question is now, what proof do you have that wheelie bins will work for Merton?

Reply

I'd like to thank the Conservative Trinity candidate for coming to ask a Supplementary Question. I'm sure we will be crossing paths during the election campaign and discussing this issue in great depth and I look forward to it. In terms of wheeled bins I'd just like to reflect on the previous answer in terms of two thirds of Local Authorities across the UK have wheeled bins, there are studies such as the WRAP study into wheeled bins that shows that it proves that there is a reduction of up to 50% in street waste that is impacted by having the wheeled bins and we saw in the Lavender Fields trial that by having wheeled bins the streets were cleaner. So I think there is a lot of evidence out there in terms of why wheeled bins are the answer and that is why this Local Authority has decided to adopt them in October 2018.

14. From: Michael Ormrod

To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration Environment and Housing

The 2 taxi rank bays outside Centre Court allow for taxi drivers to wait for the lights to turn red outside the prince of wales waiting for a bay and causes backups down Hartfield Rd toward the entry/exit to Morrisons car park. Can enforcement cameras be installed to prevent this?

Reply

The council will review any CCTV evidence of this practice and consider whether cameras, or on-foot patrol will be the best form of enforcement. We will also report this to Transport for London's taxi division to bring it to their attention.

15. From: Luke Taylor

To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration Environment and Housing

How does the council currently prioritise CIL funding for each functional area (schools/community centres/transport etc) and what proportion of CIL funding has been spent on individual areas for each of the last 4 years?

Reply

To date, the Council has allocated CIL funding towards the construction of the new Morden Leisure Centre. This allocation totalled £2.7 million which has been spent over 2017-18. Morden Leisure Centre was identified as a key infrastructure item required to support the development of the borough including the planned regeneration of Morden Town Centre, as part of the preparation of the adopted Merton Core Strategy. The Leisure Centre was the first to be allocated funding as it was the first project on the CIL (Regulation 123) List to come forward for funding that was ready for allocation (e.g. planning permission granted and construction ready to start) During 2018-19 the council will consider CIL funding for further major infrastructure projects where they are ready for allocation. In addition, in September 2017 Merton's Cabinet approved the governance and allocation criteria for the Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy fund. Public consultation took place from November 2017 to January 2018 to ask for specific projects. In January 2018 Cabinet allocated £5,000 to every ward in the borough for small scale public space projects and set aside up to £213,000 to partner fund the delivery of Merton's London Borough of Culture bid, should the council be successful. Officers are now assessing the representations received at the recent consultation against the Neighbourhood CIL criteria and will recommend allocations to councilors for the 2018-19 financial year. More information can be found on Merton's Community Infrastructure Levy "spending the levy" webpage.

<https://www2.merton.gov.uk/environment/planning/cil/spendingthelevy.htm>

16. From: Edward Gretton

To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration Environment and Housing

How is the Council working to resolve the traffic congestion at the Durnsford Road / Plough Lane box junction?

Reply

In March 2017, the capacity and the operation of this junction was fully reviewed by TfL and as part of Merton's proposal to removed all the banned movements at that time, the signals were modified to operate at its optimum. The road network are all London distributor road and it is operating better than some other junctions in the Borough. The Council, therefore, has no plans for this junction at this time.

ANPR enforcement cameras are currently in place in Durnsford Road leading up to the junction of Gap Rd. However, the coverage of these enforcement does not extend to cover and enforce in the location referred to. The parking enforcement team have advised that they will now carry out a site survey to measure the lack of non-compliance by the motorists at Durnsford Road/Plough Lane. If the assessment demonstrates a proven need for the installation of enforcement cameras at this location then, subject to a technical feasibility assessment these could be installed.

Supplementary

Thank you very much Madam Deputy Mayor. I have another question to the Cabinet Member for Merton's Street Cleanliness I think he calls himself; the question relates to the box junction at Durnsford Road which has appalling traffic jams and terrible road congestion there and air pollution in Haydons Road and he's responded by saying that this junction works very well, he's got no plans to review it or look at it at all. Does he accept that there is a very serious design problem with this junction given reports in the Wimbledon Guardian that residents have been fined about £130,000 in 2017 alone?

Reply

Thank you. Can I welcome another Conservative candidate. In relation to the box junction of course we undertake a regular assessment of accidents at that junction and if necessary we do take action. Clearly in terms of traffic congestion, traffic congestion happens at many junctions across the Borough. ANPR enforcement cameras are there to ensure that traffic enforcement is actually carried out, that the junction is able to flow. Clearly from time to time we will undertake improvements but those improvements have to be justified in terms of accident data and records but I do note the comments that Mr Olroyd (sic) has made but at this present time we have no further plans to undertake work at this junction.

17. From: Laura Paine

To the Cabinet Member for Children's Services

The minutes of the last meeting referred to facilities for physical activity in children's playgrounds, paired with statistics for levels of physical activity of 15 year olds who are beyond the age range of most playgrounds. What is Merton doing to encourage physical activity in adolescents/older children?

Reply

Merton's Child Healthy Weight Action plan theme 3 is about promoting physical activity and physical activity promoting environments. As part of this, schools are being encouraged and supported to sign up and achieve their Healthy Schools Status (Bronze, Silver, Gold) where Physical Activity is one of the key elements. Ensuring children and young people achieve a minimum of 90 minutes to 2 hours curriculum PE a week and health-related exercise should be included in the curriculum as part of the criteria to achieve award. One secondary school has achieved their Bronze award and others are being supported to achieve their bronze awards through the Merton School Sports Partnership (MSSP). MSSP also support schools with inter school sports competitions and holiday physical activity programmes to get children and young people more active. A Merton Mile will be implemented in 2018 in one of the local parks which will mark out a 1 mile path in a local park to promote daily physical activity and making use of local parks which will also be available for adolescents/older children to use.

Children's playgrounds have an upper age limit of around 14 years old. For age groups above this, there are other recreational facilities available including (but not limited to) a skate park, 1 dedicated teen play area (Morden Park), 10 outdoor gyms, 22 Multi Use Games Areas, 2 crazy golf courses, and numerous sports pitches/courts to encourage adolescents/older children to be physically active.

There is a BMX track in Mitcham (run by Mitcham Saints), the 3 leisure centres and the Watersports Centre at Wimbledon Park (which is mainly utilised by school age children). In addition to school groups which use these facilities, there are also specific sessions run for voluntary groups such as scouts and guides who cater for teens out of school hours. The council also has various summer/holiday activity programmes running to encourage physical activity in adolescents/older children. Merton Active gives details on physical activity opportunities available in Merton for children up to the age of 18 years. The Sports Blast programme also encouraged 14 to 25 year olds to get physically active and ran for 3 years (ended in 2017).

18. From: John Braithwaite To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration Environment and Housing

What is the breakdown of how Section 106 contributions have been spent/allocated for different uses (education/transport/community etc) and what benefit has the borough derived from these over each of the last 4 years?

Reply

S106 and CIL is reported each year in Merton's Authority Monitoring Report, available online on Merton Council's website:

Public Questions to Full Council 7 February

Use	Year	Amount allocated/spent	Benefit
Affordable housing	16/17	£148,963.00	8 New Affordable Housing Units
Community facilities	13/14	£60,000.00	New Scout Hut
Community facilities	14/15	£25,000.00	New Scout Hut
Education	14/15	£1,177,000.00	Expanded schools across the borough
Education	15/16	£844,000.00	Expanded schools across the borough
Employment	13/14	£93,721.00	Enhanced visibility and viability of businesses by encouraging greater access and footfall in Mitcham Town Centre, through public realm/traffic/transport improvements.
Heritage	14/15	£60,485.00	Work towards building a new heritage centre, Chapter House, Merton Priory.
Heritage	15/16	£63,250.00	Work towards building a new heritage centre, Chapter House, Merton Priory.
Leisure	13/14	£165,000.00	Enhanced leisure offer at the Cannons Leisure Centre and St Marks Academy in Mitcham;
Leisure	14/15	£41,450.00	Enhanced leisure offer at the St Marks Academy in Mitcham & Wimbledon Park
Open space	13/14	£10,000.00	Protection of nature conservation assets at Mitcham Common
Open space	14/15	£9,851.93	Open space improvement in

			Cannizaro, Wimbledon
Open space	15/16	£77,000.00	Transfer of Metropolitan Open Land, in West Wimbledon to the Council enabled; Maintenance and enhancement of sports field, Grand Drive, Lower Morden
Public realm	13/14	£564,010.00	Improved public realm in Colliers Wood, Mitcham and Raynes Park Town Centres
Public realm	15/16	£16,381.33	Improved public realm in Colliers Wood Town Centre
Transport	13/14	£42,562.00	Improving parking environment on Brenley Close. Highways/transport enhancements in Victoria Road, Mitcham
Transport	14/15	£47,000.00	Upgraded highway adjacent to development, Commonsides East/Windmill Road, Mitcham
Transport	15/16	£32,000.00	Upgraded highway adjacent to development, Commonsides East/Windmill Road, Mitcham

19. From: Carl Quilliam

To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration Environment and Housing

How much section 106 and CIL money has been collected in each of the last four years, and how much of it has been spent in each year?

Reply

S106 and CIL is reported each year in Merton's Authority Monitoring Report, available online on Merton Council's website:

	CIL income	S106 income	CIL Spend	S106 spend
	(excludes Mayoral CIL income for			

	Crossrail)			
13/14	£0.00	£1,484,000.00	£0.00	£312,046.08
14/15	£129,717.00	£2,160,000.00	£0.00	£1,718,818.24
15/16	£2,856,810.66	£1,660,000.00	£0.00	£1,655,175.80
16/17	£3,252,986.65	£1,923,000.00	£0.00 (£2.7m committed for 2017/18)	£387,135.39

20. From: Nicola Schofield

To the Cabinet Member for Street Cleanliness and Parking

Given the huge amounts of litter strewn across pavements by inadequate refuse collection, and blocked drains due to unswept fallen leaves, what action will the council take to enforce the Veolia street cleaning contract in South Park Rd (Trinity)? Both immediate remedial action & ongoing to prevent recurrence?

Reply

Our contractor, Veolia, is required to maintain the required level of street cleaning across the borough. To achieve this consistent standard of cleansing, Veolia use a number of different methods of cleaning the streets and alter the frequency depending on the footfall and littering of the area concerned. Street operatives conduct manual litter picking and broom sweeping alongside mechanical and electrical sweepers which provide an efficient and effective way to lift litter and detritus from Merton's streets.

Our refuse crew are required to clean up any spillage caused during the collection of waste and each crew is equipped with shovel and brooms, however research carried out by the Tidy Britain Group on behalf of the council, indicated that as much as 50% of all street waste arising in residential roads can be attributed to the black sack and box collection schemes operated within Merton. In October 2018 we will be introducing a wheelie bin collection service which will greatly reduce the level of street blown litter from the boxes and torn black sack waste created by foxes and other animals.

We are aware that specific issues have been identified around South Park Road. Our Neighbourhood Client Team have been working with Veolia to address this and improvements have recently been achieved.

21. From: Nigel Benbow

To the Leader of the Council

Merton Hall was recently awarded 'Asset of Community Value' status by this Council. Will the Council Leader and his Labour administration therefore pledge not to commence demolition of Merton Hall until after the local elections? Otherwise this is their clear sign of not listening to the residents of South Wimbledon.

Reply

The questions from Nigel Benbow and John Chambers are the same so I will answer them together.

Following the Asset of Community Value (ACV) application in late September 2017, Cabinet expected Merton Hall to meet the criteria to be listed as an ACV, and so carefully considered this matter before making its Merton Hall construction works contract decision on 10 December 2017, which was also subject to post decision scrutiny on 10 January 2018. The position has not changed since then and we will proceed with the proposed building works.

The reason for this is that there is an urgent and compelling need to provide a clear site at High Path to enable works to build the Harris Wimbledon secondary school to a tight timescale; a prompt start to the works at Merton Hall and so the vacation of Elim Church from High Path is the only means to deliver it. The implications of not doing it is that children may be without a statutory school place or the council would need to find alternative means for September 2018 through temporary buildings at considerable cost and disruption. Prior to the rather late ACV listing the Council committed extensive resources to deliver the clear site at High Path for the secondary school, and the Elim Church site is the last piece in the jigsaw to deliver it.

The council will fully comply with the requirements of the ACV listing i.e. relevant local groups will be given the opportunity to come up with a bid for the asset and we would consider these bids at that time. However, it is worth being open with you in that given the benefits that the secondary school land assembly offers in providing statutory school places at a fraction of the cost of alternative means for the council, it is difficult to see how any alternative bid could be received that was affordable to any bidder and could meet "better consideration". Therefore it is correct that the school timetable should not be postponed and the Merton Hall works should proceed.

Supplementary

I am keen to know; Harris Wimbledon School, why are you so keen to go ahead with the demolition of Merton Hall? It proves you're not listening to the people of the Abbey ward. The people are upset and angry and they have a feeling of being ignored and they are not happy about it and I have tried to stand up with them. I must point out, do you believe in equal rights?

Reply

Thank you, there were a number of items in that question. First, as a former Equality and Human Rights Commissioner, a former Disability Rights Commissioner, I do believe in Equal Rights and this Council, this Labour Council is steeped in Equal Rights and will continue to allocate our Labour values on the issue of Equal Rights. I thank you for asking that element. With regard to the Merton Hall and the Asset of Community Value, the Council is wedded to its statutory duty to provide school places for thousands of children and hundreds of parents in Wimbledon, in South Wimbledon, so we are wedded to that statutory duty and whilst we have allocated Asset of Community Value, we will continue without delay to move towards satisfying that statutory duty that parents look to the Council to provide School Places and at Secondary School Level, clearly now our Schools are Good and Outstanding.

**22. From: Gregory Bryant
To the Leader of the Council**

Does Cllr Alambritis personally believe that the Historical Society or Historic England to be 'hysterical', as per his seemingly mocking reference to the institution(s) on a Radio Jackie interview and at a Colliers Wood community meeting in 2017? The institution(s) have been involved in Merton Hall's freehold swap.

Reply

Since it was founded in 1868, the Royal Historical Society has become the foremost society in the UK working with professional historians and advancing the scholarly study of the past. Similarly, the Merton Historical Society undertakes in-depth research on the history of the borough and has always had a hugely respected reputation for its publications.

Historic England, the public body that looks after England's historic environment, does the vital job of championing and protecting historic places, and helping people understand, value and care for them. It carries out and funds high-quality applied research to support the protection and management of the historic environment, offering a range of services including grants, planning, education and research, as well as training and skill development.

One of the key services it manages is getting buildings and sites listed. Listing is the act of identifying the most important parts of our heritage so they can be protected by law. Listing an historic building or site celebrates its significance and makes sure that our history can be enjoyed by present and future generations.

I applaud the work of these prestigious and influential bodies and Historic England's co-operation with the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport so he can come to sound decisions on the status of buildings in Merton, such as the recent decision on Merton Hall.

Supplementary

Yes thank you. The Supplementary Question is for the Leader of the Council. If you had replied to my question stating that you hold the bodies in high esteem, then why call them hysterical repeatedly? Do you suffer from a personality disorder or are you unable to answer questions correctly?

Reply

I thank Gregory Bryant for his main question and for his supplementary question. I'll refer him to the written answer which shows the respect that we hold for the two organisations which he mentioned.

**23. From: Paul Kohler
To the Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Engagement and Equalities**

Previously I asked what discussions the Council has had with MPs Stephen Hammond/Siobhain McDonagh about the closure of Wimbledon Police station, but the response failed to answer my question. Am I to understand from this obfuscation that the Council has had no discussions with either MP on this important issue?

Reply

The consultation process on the Metropolitan Police Estate was a MOPAC lead initiative and not a local borough one. The consultation proposed to close Wimbledon Police Station whilst retaining the site/buildings of Mitcham. The borough did participate in the consultation process returning a response that was a collective process using consolidated contributions from statutory partners, elected representatives and community personnel. The council response was apolitical. Council officers did not meet with either MP as part of this process.

**24. From: Simon McGrath
To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration Environment and Housing**

Where the Planning Committee has approved a development with less than 40% affordable homes and a follow up review of sale prices has been carried out, can you please state what the results of these reviews have been for each of the last 3 years?

Reply

Each individual case is assessed and the review undertaken where appropriate. The results for each case will be different depending on the circumstances of the scheme. Quite a few schemes may not have been implemented at all. The overall position is not monitored in those terms but the overall delivery of affordable housing is included in the annual monitoring report.

Many of the schemes with review mechanisms as part of the S106 have recently received planning permission and have not yet met the target date to trigger a review (usually relying on complete construction, sales or occupation of the scheme). One scheme that has met its trigger is Linden Homes, 71-91 Hartfield Road, Wimbledon. A review was undertaken and in 2016-17 a financial contribution of £454,482 was paid to the council to spend on affordable housing in the borough as a result of the review.

**25. From: Emily Robertson
To the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health**

The Labour motion of 13th September attributes a 20% increase in attendance at St Helier A&E to closure of the Wilson Health Centre, yet in the Mitcham community forum minutes Dr Hing is quoted saying this closure resulted in no increase in A&E visits. How are both parties measuring this?

Reply

The figure used in the motion on 13 September which was unanimously agreed by council came from evidence reported by a Morden-based GP. That figure was put to the Chief Executive of Epsom and St Helier Trust by the Member of Parliament for Mitcham and Morden, and has not been challenged. A rise in presentations at St Helier was reported by a number of others at the time, including Merton Mencap which stated that following the closure of the walk-in centre *'attendance at St Helier Hospital's A&E department has greatly increased.'* (<http://www.mertonmencap.org.uk/pdfs/Adults-First-Newsletter-Autum2017.pdf>)

Merton Clinical Commissioning Group regularly reviews hospital statistics to look for trends. Using 'SUS'^[1] (hospital activity) data, MCCG report that A&E attendances for Merton GP registered patients have increased by 2.1% (year to date, April-November 2017) across all local hospitals, compared to the same time period last year. This is in line with the national picture.

Specifically at Epsom & St Helier (ESH) A&E, the year to date growth in A&E attendances from Merton GP registered patients is 1.4%, compared to the same time period in the previous year.

Looking at the east of the borough to assess the impact on patients who live in the vicinity of the Wilson Health Centre, MCCG report that hospital activity data for this same time period shows an average 2% increase in A&E attendances at ESH from patients in wards covering the CR4 postcode (Colliers Wood, Cricket Green, Figges Marsh, Graveney, Lavender Fields, Longthornton, Pollards Hill, Ravensbury), compared to the previous year.

^[1] <http://content.digital.nhs.uk/sus>

¹ <http://content.digital.nhs.uk/sus>

**26 From: Jane Barnes
To the Cabinet Member for Community and Culture**

What guarantees can be given on public access in Morley Park in perpetuity – specifically on access to the playing fields, on access to all park paths at normal Merton park opening times, and by prior agreement for community use of the pavilion?

Reply

The proposed arrangements for Morley Park include the transfer of the management of the park from Berkeley Homes to Merton Council who at that point will become the freeholder.

At, or soon after the point of land transfer, the upper section of the new public open space, comprising mainly woodland and meadow, will become freely accessible to the public during standard parks opening hours.

The lower section of the site, by Cottenham Park Road, and comprising mainly a sports field and an associated sports pavilion, will, contemporaneously, be transferred under a lease from the Council to the Ursuline High School. There are provisions within the draft lease, already understood by the school, to ensure that there is public access around the playing fields at all times during operational hours, including at those times when the sports pitches are in use by the school.

Subject to the utilisation of the pavilion by the school, it is anticipated by the Council that the building will be available for hire by other sports clubs and organisations. There are specific provisions within the draft pavilion lease, appreciated by the school, that enables the Council to nominate use of the building to organisations on at least 6 occasions annually. The Council is already minded to allocate those times to local community groups.

**27. From: Vincent Bolt
To the Cabinet Member for Street Cleanliness and Parking**

Will the council agree to monitor air quality within Wimbledon town centre both before and during Wimbledon fortnight, and what additional measures does the council propose to put in place this year and in future years to minimise the impact of Wimbledon fortnight on air quality?

Reply

The council currently has two methods of monitoring air quality in the borough.

The first is through very expensive automated monitoring stations. We have two in the borough, one located in the Civic Centre measuring NO₂, the other in Merton Road monitoring PM₁₀ (particulates).

The other method is the through the use of diffusion tubes for measuring monthly NO₂ averages. Since 2017 we have increased the number of tubes from 20 to 50, with better distribution around the borough. This should allow for assessment in increased traffic along main roads and show changes in air quality.

**28. From: John Chambers
To the Cabinet Member for Finance**

Merton Hall has been listed as an Asset of Community Value, would it not be the correct democratic procedure to allow the Residents the stated 6 months under the act to acquire Merton Hall and preserve it intact for use of all, not the chosen Homophobic few?

Reply

The questions from Nigel Benbow and John Chambers are the same so I will answer them together.

Following the Asset of Community Value (ACV) application in late September 2017, Cabinet expected Merton Hall to meet the criteria to be listed as an ACV, and so carefully considered this matter before making its Merton Hall construction works contract decision on 10 December 2017, which was also subject to post decision scrutiny on 10 January 2018. The position has not changed since then and we will proceed with the proposed building works.

The reason for this is that there is an urgent and compelling need to provide a clear site at High Path to enable works to build the Harris Wimbledon secondary school to a tight timescale; a prompt start to the works at Merton Hall and so the vacation of Elim Church from High Path is the only means to deliver it. The implications of not doing it is that children may be without a statutory school place or the council would need to find alternative means for September 2018 through temporary buildings at considerable cost and disruption. Prior to the rather late ACV listing the Council committed extensive resources to deliver the clear site at High Path for the secondary school, and the Elim Church site is the last piece in the jigsaw to deliver it.

The council will fully comply with the requirements of the ACV listing i.e. relevant local groups will be given the opportunity to come up with a bid for the asset and we would consider these bids at that time. However, it is worth being open with you in that given the benefits that the secondary school land assembly offers in providing statutory school places at a fraction of the cost of alternative means for the council, it is difficult to see how any alternative bid could be received that was affordable to any bidder and could meet "better consideration". Therefore it is correct that the school timetable should not be postponed and the Merton Hall works should proceed.

**29. From: Eve Cohen
To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration Environment and Housing**

The DHP Battle Close Viability Report was flawed - 90 Garfield Road is set back 7m from the boundary allowing a larger building on Battle Close. Will the site therefore

be re-evaluated with a more innovative approach eg 2 storey section closer to north boundary with outdoor space on roof?

Reply

The Battle Close DHP study is not flawed at all – it clearly shows that a 3-storey building with sports hall to government space standards and minimal external play/PE area would simply not fit on the site. While outdoor space on the roof can provide some use, it is entirely inappropriate for secondary school PE activities such as ball games which is an essential part of the school curriculum and would be ruled out for any scheme as the sole means for outdoor PE, as it was ruled out for High Path.

The DHP site assessment therefore clearly concludes that the minimum height of the school building to fit on the site would be five storeys just as at proposed at High Path. This is hardly surprising since the sites are a similar size. However, unlike High Path it has many residential properties directly backing onto it. This height of building would therefore not be acceptable in this location due to overshadowing to various properties, dominant visual presence directly impacting the views of various properties to the east and west, and overlooking onto neighbouring residential properties.

While the DHP Viability report was based on 90 Garfield Road before its recent development, this is one of many residential properties immediately backing onto the Battle Close (former Virgin Active) site and makes no difference to the overall assessment.

30. From: Paymon Khamooshi To the Cabinet Member for Finance

Which 5 contractors receive the largest % of council contracts, both by number of contracts and value of contracts, and what % do they receive?

Reply

Our spend analysis data for Financial Year 2016/17 shows that the 5 contractors who received the largest percentage of contracts collectively across the Council by value are:

COMENSURA	£ 14,012,466	10%
NEWSCHOOLS (MERTON)	£ 12,454,448	9%
FM CONWAY	£ 7,510,777	5%
KINGSTON CORPORATION (WASTE)	£ 5,409,919	4%
NHS MERTON CCG	£ 3,882,339	3%

The data held by the Council does not allow for reporting on the number of contracts delivered by one contractor. As outlined in the Procurement Strategy, we are working

closely with the eTendering system provider to develop a more comprehensive suite of reports from the system.

**31. From: Emma Maddison
To the Cabinet Member for Street Cleanliness and Parking**

Given the popularity of wood burning stoves, even in smokeless fuel areas, will the council include a review of the usage of these and their impact on local air quality in its review on bonfires?

Reply

Wood burning stoves and their contribution to poor air quality is currently a London wide and National concern. Even though there are controls currently in place relating to Smoke Control Areas and exempted fire places, the increase in popularity of these devices is having a detrimental impact upon air quality.

As well as the national work that's underway at the moment, our Pollution Team in the Regulatory Services Partnership has applied for funding from DEFRA to look at the impact and potential future controls of wood burners. So to conclude, yes this is being considered locally and nationally.

**32. From: Marie Davinson
To the Cabinet Member for Street Cleanliness and Parking**

Nothing being put in place to resolve the daily dumping of waste on road kerbsides from residents above shops or shops converted to residential. What is being put in place to resolve this situation? Money would be better spent on targeting this major issue.

Reply

Merton Council has a dedicated Environmental Enforcement Team that tackles offences such as littering and dumping of waste. They work with residents to inform them of their duties by delivering guidance letters and putting up posters in areas affected by dumping. We have also implemented time-banded collections in Wimbledon and Merton High Street in order to reduce the times of the week when bags are presented for collection. Where engagement and guidance does not work, our enforcement team issues Fixed Penalty Notices to those residents who continually leave their waste on the pavement when it is not their collection day.

**33. From: Zoe Meza Williams
To the Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Engagement and Equalities**

How is the council supporting recent campaigns such as #metoo and #timesup, and does it agree all women should be free to live and work free from harassment and abuse, in Merton and beyond?

Reply

The Council is committed to supporting victims of harassment, abuse, sexual and domestic violence. The council was the first London Borough to adopt the #AskAngela campaign and we now have 100% of licensed premises in Wimbledon signed up to this work and 95% coverage across the borough

We were the second London borough to sign up to the UK Says No More campaign where we are now proudly the biggest supporting borough. The evidence of this coming through our work over the last 12 months and by Merton being honoured to have our DV lead participate as a face in the national campaign

Our work in these areas are promoted weekly, we run a weekly one stop shop, participate in annual campaigns and place articles focused on the areas of VAWG in every My Merton magazine

There is much more to do around encouraging victims of sexual violence to report and this is a commitment which we have and, is something our whole partnership signs up to.

34. From: David Lindsay

To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration Environment and Housing

What steps is the Council taking to prevent the interminable extension of roadworks beyond an agreed date, using 'unforeseen circumstances' as an excuse, not just once, but repeatedly?

Reply

Merton Council assess every extension request on an individual basis. When assessing extensions Merton look at the progress of the works, the attendance of operatives and the disruption caused. There are occasions where "unforeseen circumstances" happen which are not only out of control of the contractor, but also out of control for Merton. While it is unusual that Unforeseen Circumstances happen on multiple occasions on one site, it is very much possible, and the likelihood of them occurring increases in parallel to the complexity of the works.

Where possible we provide as much information as possible via Twitter and the Merton Council website, along with weekly bulletins available to all stakeholders.

If a particular site is causing concern, once further information is provided the Council would be happy to investigate and address the concerns.

35. From: Sara Sharp

To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration Environment and Housing

Why can't the Council kit out Elim Church on a portion of the 9,700 sqm Battle Close site in SW19 - equivalent to its High Path site size -instead of the public's Merton Hall, and use the remaining 8,450 square metres of Battle Close for housing?

Reply

The suggestion has been considered previously and there are two key reasons why it is not viable – time and value for money.

The suggestion requires a mixed use church and housing development project to be started from scratch, and so one to two years behind the Merton Hall project, which has been nearly two years in the development prior to the council being ready to start works. We have documented on many occasions that the need for the new school places is this September so certainty is required now for High Path to be a clear site for the school to open, and works need to start at High Path in early 2019. The suggestion from Ms Sharp would not therefore deliver this.

Secondly, if Battle Close is suitable for a mixed use development with housing, so it has housing values. Since Elim would also require an equivalent building to be provided this will cost the council considerably more than the Merton Hall proposal.

Lastly, Merton Hall has now been closed for over four months and so all the previous users were re-located some time ago. It is therefore important that it has an appropriate community use as soon as possible, and the Elim proposal provides this.

36. Richard English

To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration Environment and Housing

The Post Office on Kingston Road has been closed since January 5th. This was saved from closure in 2008 by a residents' campaign. What steps are Councillors taking to ensure it reopens soon?

Reply

The Council was notified of this closure on 24th January in a letter from the Post Office Network Operations Manager. This follows the resignation of the Postmaster at this site and we understand that the Post office see the closure as temporary. We understand that the Post Office are actively seeking potential retail partners and we have asked the Merton Chamber of Commerce to circulate this opportunity to their membership and database.

The Council does not regulate Post Office operations, however I shall be writing to the Network Operations Manager to seek assurances that this Post Office will re-open as soon as practically possible. In the meantime If you know anyone who is interested please contact the Post Office Agency Recruitment team contact telephone number: 0845 601 6260.

37. From: Richard Hackforth-Jones

To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration Environment and Housing

Why did Merton Council not apply for any government funding for their EV charge points?

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/funding-for-thousands-of-electric-car-charge-points-unused-by-councils>

Reply

Merton has already successfully bid for government funding for EV charge points via various schemes and is proposing a growth in EV charging points from the current 21 to 125. This includes supporting TfL in the delivery of the borough's first rapid charger and the trial of lamp column chargers.

The borough first rapid charger will hopefully be delivered by TfL by the end of March 2018. The next batch of 36 Source London Chargers (delivered at zero cost to the council by Bluepoint Ltd, including equipment, power supply, maintenance and backroom management) is planned to be installed in April/May 2018, subject to the normal statutory public consultation and notification processes.

The council has also secured funding to trial the use of lamp column charges via the Go Ultra Low City Scheme (Government Grant funded for 75% of the cost of the scheme) managed by London councils and TfL. Potential locations for the socket charges will be found once procurement contracts have been finalised and suppliers agreed.

In addition to the above, at planning applications council officers have successfully negotiated Rapid EV charging points to be installed in publicly accessible car parks, for example at Lidl in north Mitcham. Rapid EV charging points can charge a vehicle from 0 to 80% in 15-30 minutes.

Recent analysis of SMMT (Society of Motor Manufactures and Traders) data for new registrations for ULEV (Ultra Low Emission Vehicles) in Merton has risen from 320 to 560 vehicles in 2017 or a rise of 75%. In recognition of this growth trend the council has a medium term ambition to help facilitate the delivery of a borough-wide network of 125 publically accessible charge points, including supporting TfL in the delivery of the boroughs first rapid charger and the trial of lamp column chargers.

The next batch of 36 Source London Chargers (delivered at zero cost to the council by bluepoint limited, including equipment, power supply, maintenance and backroom management) is planned to be installed in April/May 2018, subject to the normal statutory public consultation and notification processes. The borough first rapid charger will hopefully be delivered by TfL by the end of March. Most councils do not have the specialist and technical resources to manage the electric vehicle charging infrastructure. The rapid technologically evolution of charging equipment and car batteries also makes partnering with suppliers the most effective use of council resources.

The council has also secured limited funding to trial the use of lamp column charges via the Go Ultra Low City Scheme (Government Grant funded) managed by London councils and TfL. As is usually the case with government funding initiatives the grant

only cover 75% of the capital cost. The outstanding funding for on-going maintenance and backroom operations still has to be found by boroughs. Potential locations for the socket charges will be found once procurement contracts have been finalised and suppliers agreed.

**38. From: Geoff Cooper
To the Cabinet Member for Finance**

I would like to know what % of council contracts <£100,000 in the last 3 years received more than the required minimum of 3 bids? What % receive few than 3 bids?

Reply

In the last 3 years from 01 January 2015 to 31 December 2017, 44% of contracts valued <£100,000 received more than 3 responses. The remaining 56% received fewer than 3 responses. The preceding Council Contract Standing Orders (CSOs) sets out a requirement for a Request for Quotation (RfQ) to be sent out to 3 tenderers. The CSOs also state the following:

- *For Contracts with a value at or above £25,000 and below £100,000, the Contract may be procured by any of the following means:*
- *using an existing Corporate Contract or Framework Agreement;*
- *seeking Quotations directly from organisations without advertising; or*
- *advertising the Contract publically.*

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From **Councillor Kelly Braund** to the **Cabinet Member for Children's Services**

One of the four recommendations from our Ofsted report was to ensure that 'staying put' is made available to all care leavers who would benefit from this. Can the Cabinet Member update us on progress of this?

Reply

At the time of the inspection Merton had two young people who were in Staying Put arrangements with their Foster Carer and we were in the process of updating and refreshing our Staying Put Policy. At the time of writing we now have five young people in SP arrangements and we are likely to have more so in the future. These arrangements can be better for our young people and can be less costly than semi-independent provision. There are potentially a further six young people who are 18 before April 2018, currently expressing an interest in Staying Put. It is recognised that increasing the number of young people staying put places extra demand on existing foster care provision and therefore increases the importance of continuing to recruit new foster carers.

Supplementary

Thank you Deputy Madam Mayor. I have a question for the Cabinet Member for Children's Services. Can the Cabinet Member tell us what action is being taken to ensure that we have a sufficient number of foster carers?

Reply

I thank Councillor Braund for her supplementary. As she will know and many people know there is a national foster carer shortage. It's not unique to Merton. In Merton we do have a challenge around particular groups; siblings and teenagers but we work tirelessly to ensure that we are getting out regular fostering information across events, we have Social Media, Print Media, if you pick up today's Guardian you will see there is an advert for Foster Carers. There are regular Foster Information Events, the next one is actually on Valentines Day, what better connection; 10:30am at Morden Baptist Church but all of that information and I will make it clear across this Chamber, if we all put it out in our newsletters and use our Social Media, do everything we can to drum up more fostering support.

From **Councillor Linda Taylor** to the **Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Environment and Housing**:

There have been significant traffic problems in Trinity/Wimbledon Park wards along Haydons Road. When will the council investigate measures to reduce this traffic congestion problem?

Reply

Haydons Road is a local distributor road and a main traffic link between Merton & Wandsworth with a major junction at Durnsford Rd.

Non ST Questions

In March 2017, the capacity and the operation of the Haydon's Road / Durnsford junction was fully reviewed by TfL and as part of Merton's congestion relief proposal to remove all the banned movements at that time, the signals were modified to operate at its optimum capacity. The road network in this location is a London distributor road and it is operating better than some other junctions in the Borough. The Council, therefore, has no further plans for this junction at this time and always encourage motorists to consider walking and cycling for short local trips and improving air quality.

Supplementary

I do thank the Cabinet Member for his response, I have to say I think it is rather a weak and complacent response, but what I'd like to know is; the long term delays and closures of Ashcombe Road Bridge which have caused a lot of grief to residents and exacerbated traffic congestion. Why didn't the Cabinet Member ensure that the works were completed much more quickly instead of making our residents suffer and what lessons has he learnt to make sure that such a fiasco does not happen again?

Reply

I'd like to thank Councillor Taylor for her supplementary on Ashcombe Road. It is regrettable that the works went on longer than anticipated but these were necessary works that needed to be carried out to the Bridge. Whilst we would like things to happen promptly, sadly that is not always the case. I recognise the additional traffic that congestion that must cause in this area, but this isn't the first instance of this happening in the Borough; from time to time, bridges close, roads close which do have an impact in terms of traffic movements in the Borough. So I would say to Councillor Taylor I believe that the works were necessary, they needed to be carried out and I believe that the Council took the right approach. Thank you.

From Councillor Brenda Fraser to the Cabinet Member for Children's Services

With increasing demands on housing across London what are we doing in Merton to support our Care Leavers?

Reply

We have just refreshed our Looked after Children and Care Leavers Sufficiency Strategy which has been informed by the recent Scrutiny Review of care leavers Accommodation. We are busy taking forward the priorities arising from the strategy and the recommendations from the task group. These include: one House of Multiple Occupancy Pilot for five young people, with discussions ongoing regarding a second provision; work with Community and Housing to establish closer links with the Shared Lives programme; full uptake of our annual Housing quota in liaison with Housing Needs; and a review of our current semi-independent offer. This is in addition to our refresh of Staying Put locally.

Supplementary

Yes Madam Deputy Mayor, I'd like to thank the Cabinet Member for her answer and also to find out if she could expand on the HMO pilot?

Reply

I thank the Councillor for her supplementary. We have, as I think it is eluded to in my written response, had a successful pilot so far with a House of Multiple Occupation, so another way in which we can support our care leavers with alternative options when they are looking for housing. That pilot has gone so well that we already in talks for a second HMO so again showing our partnership working with the private sector also our care leavers and the Social Workers here. So we hope to be able to have that second one up and running alongside some of the other initiatives that we talked about in there including need and mentor tenancies, so hopefully we will be able to offer that range for our Looked After Children so they have all of the options that are available to them but so far the pilot is going well.

From **Councillor Oonagh Moulton** to the **Leader of the Council**:

What is the administration's view on external partnerships with private companies, particularly when it comes to housing?

Reply

With regard to housing, Merton Council is a non-stock owning authority following the stock transfer of homes to Clarion Housing Group in 2010. The council has no current proposals to procure any external partnerships with private companies for the delivery of housing save for our exploration of a Joint Venture Delivery vehicle for the development of Morden Town Centre. Such a venture could assist the Council in providing additional capacity and resources to deliver the growth we believe possible at less risk to the Council tax payer.

Supplementary

Thank you Madam Deputy Mayor. I just do have a supplementary. Given the recent Momentum debacle in Haringey and forcing out of Labour Leader amid accusations of sexism and bullying, what threat does Momentum pose to this Council and its residents and indeed to the future Labour Group leadership of Councillor Alambritis?

Reply

I thank the Leader of the Opposition. The only threat that this group and the residents of this Borough face is should, god forbid, a Tory Council take over in 2018. I don't see that happening; we will be here for a long time to come, thank you very much.

From **Councillor Mike Brunt** to the **Cabinet Member for Education**

With the Government recently revising GCSE and A level results figures, can the Cabinet Member update us on the standing of Merton's schools?

Reply

Merton's performance in GCSE outcomes has been exceptionally strong this past year. The Borough's schools are ranked first in the country for Progress 8 (one of

Non ST Questions

the key indicators against which schools are judged). The Attainment 8 score is well above the national average, as is the proportion of students achieving grades 9-5 in both English and mathematics.

At KS5, the proportion of students achieving grades A*-E in the A level examinations have risen in comparison with last year. Schools are also judged in relation to students' performance in Applied General qualifications, where Merton's points score of 41.56 is well above the national average of 35.72. Three schools achieved average grades of starred Distinction in these qualifications (Raynes Park High School, Ursuline School, and the combined 6th form for Rutlish and Ricards). St Mark's Academy achieved an average of Distinction.

Supplementary

Thank you Madam Deputy Mayor. I thank the Cabinet Member for her answer to the question but I would like her to expand more on why she thinks Merton Schools have such a high achievement in the face of cuts from National Government in Education?

Reply

I'd like to thank Councillor Brunt for his supplementary question. I'd like to first of all thank, and I attributed to that, to actually thank the Headteachers, the teachers, the staff, students, parents for all their hard work and their dedication to what they do. I've visit Schools I've visited nearly all the Schools in this Borough and I have seen first-hand how enthusiastic and hardworking our teachers and head teachers are and all of that contributes to their achievement despite all of the challenges not only is there a shortfall in funding but also changes to curriculum that continue to raise the standard in our schools. Thanks also to our officers here, special thanks to Yvette, as we mentioned earlier she arrived in 2009 when Merton Schools were 104th out of 150 Local Authorities and now we are first in the entire country. So she came and did and now she's leaving but that's the state she is leaving this Borough in, so thanks to her for all she has done for education in this Borough. But it's all of that, that has made us to be, to have the kind of standard that we have in this Borough. That's why we have an additional 209 residents applicants for Secondary School and we applaud it, we want it and we need the extra space and that's why we also want Harris Academy Wimbledon to open so that we will be able to have the space for them. We want them to also be a good or outstanding Secondary School, so thank you very much for your question.

From Councillor Stephen Crowe to the Cabinet Member for Community and Culture:

A Berkeley Homes newsletter said Morley Park would open last September, the Ursuline High School scheduled sports at Morley Park in their curriculum, and local residents formed the Friends of Morley Park. Despite all this, and a formal opening of the sports facilities by Clare Balding, the whole park including the sports facilities has remained closed.

What is the reason for this delay and when will the park be open for both the school and the public to enjoy?

Reply

Non ST Questions

The Ursuline High School and Berkeley Homes did host a celebratory event in September 2017 which marked the completion of the pavilion, which was in line with the original plans to open the site at that stage. However, it was not possible to open the entire site for public use at that time owing to some unresolved issues.

Owing to the complexity of reconstructing and establishing a new, high quality public open space of this nature, there have inevitably been delays in the project. This included resolving significant local flooding issues that occurred during the summer of 2016.

It is important that the Council only accepts the site from Berkeley Homes when the Council are satisfied with the condition of it, which is not yet the case. The Council and Berkeley Homes are still in negotiations regarding some elements of the site and therefore the legal process of transferring the site to the Council has not yet been completed.

On a positive note, there has been important recent progress on the negotiations between the Council and Berkeley Homes and all parties remain committed to opening the park for use by both the school and the public in the very near future, hopefully, during the forthcoming spring season.

Supplementary

Thank you Madam Deputy Mayor. I'd like to thank the Cabinet Member for his answer to the question; I am delighted to note that Morley Park will be open, hopefully, the Cabinet Member says, in Spring this year. However my question concerns Japanese Knotweed, which is allegedly on the site of Morley Park. I would like the Cabinet Member to tell me if he can; the cost of clearing Japanese Knotweed and who would bear the cost if the Japanese knotweed were to spread off-site into the surrounding areas? Thank you very much.

Reply

I'd like to thank you for your supplementary question. Like you, I really want to get this park open, I really do, as much for the benefit of the children of the Ursuline School as anything I think we should all be particularly grateful to my colleague Andrew Judge in that respect because he saw a chance for the School and he seized on that chance and I think that's great. But I am concerned that we want to get it right, the right park for the people of Merton, for all the people of Merton. That is to me much more important than when we get it. You talked about Japanese Knotweed; the problems are well documented and there has been a worry, there's no two ways about it, that it might spread to neighbouring gardens. I can't tell you how much the work already has cost because of course Berkeley Homes have paid for it all. I can tell you that Berkeley Homes have now guaranteed us against any future costs caused by spread to any gardens that are around the park but I know that is still going through our legal department and frankly I'm not going to hurry them because I want to be absolutely right and more to the point Councillor, that's not the end of this. When everything is sorted I want to go round that park and see and to make sure that all the things that we've hoped for, for the people of Merton, are going to be delivered and I invite you and your colleagues and Jane Barnes who I

Non ST Questions

know has put an awful lot of work into this as well, to come round with me to make sure that park is exactly what the people of Merton need. Thank you very much.

From **Councillor David Chung** to the **Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Environment and Housing**

The Mayor of London Sadiq Khan has recently announced accessibility improvements being made to stations across the city. Can the Cabinet Member explain how Merton benefits from this initiative?

Reply

Wimbledon Park has recently been named as one of 13 Tube stations which will become step-free by spring 2022 as part of a £200million investment.

Mayor of London Sadiq Khan announced the major boost to the accessibility of the London Underground network, which is the biggest push for step-free access in the Tube's 155-year history.

The latest raft of investment - part of the Mayor's draft Transport Strategy - will bring the number of step-free Tube stations to more than 100 - or 40 per cent of the network. "These improvements are going to make a big difference in helping Londoners move around our city and show the real progress we are making to improve accessibility right across the capital."

Merton Council have campaigned for more step-free stations and will continue to lobby for further accessibility improvements particularly around the Thameslink and South Western Railway stations.

Supplementary

Thank you Madam Deputy Mayor. My supplementary question is as follows; In view of the welcome advances made by Transport for London in making stations step-free, what benefits would there be for the responsibility being given to them for National Rail Stations in Merton?

Reply

Thank you Madam Deputy Mayor, thank you Councillor Chung for your supplementary. I think it would be of great benefit if TFL took over the running of National Rail stations in this Borough. We've seen the transformation of London Overground stations, North of the river in terms of a better service, a more reliable service, more frequent service. We've also seen a huge change in terms of the look and feel of those stations. TFL have been ambitious, National Rail less so, I do hope that the Secretary of State, former Merton Councillor Chris Grayling does reconsider his decision not to transfer stations to TFL because we do want a truly integrated system but we want a system which is accessible to all people in this Borough. Thank you.

From **Councillor Adam Bush** to the **Cabinet Member for Finance:**

Can the Cabinet Member provide me with a breakdown by ward of how many households there are in each council tax band?

Non ST Questions

Reply

Unfortunately, the council tax register is not required to identify properties based on ward, so the information cannot be extracted from the system. However, please see below the breakdown for the borough:

Band A	1,090
Band B	8,392
Band C	22,961
Band D	27,709
Band E	13,171
Band F	5,461
Band G	4,025
Band H	1,727
Total	84,536

Supplementary

Can I firstly start by thanking the Cabinet Member for Finance for his response. Against the backdrop of his national party wanting to hike Council Tax by approximately 20-100% across Merton residents living in properties classified in Band D or above, will the Cabinet Member today publically reject this proposal by Jeremy Corbyns' close ally Chris Williamson which would cost families across this Borough over £300 a year? Thank you.

Reply

Thank you Madam Deputy Mayor and I thank the Councillor for his follow-up. This evening may very well be a first because I am actually going to defend Jeremy Corbyn, for sacking Chris Williamson for making that suggestion and I think it would be scandalous if local Tories went around telling our residents that was going to be policy when it is demonstrably not and someone who has suggested has lost their job as a result. So let that be a warning to you if you go out there, or if they go out there, Madam Mayor and say those sort of things we will hold them to account. We have a very good record on Council Tax here, I don't think anybody could characterise us as being spendthrift, or as being against people who have done well for themselves, we have taken a fair approach to Council Tax, we have only raised it when it has been absolutely necessary in order to protect services and we have absolutely no plans to introduce new bands for Council Tax. We would only do that if the Conservative Government enforce that on us and we would not be happy about that.

From **Councillor Mary Curtin** to the **Cabinet Member for Community and Culture**

Can the Cabinet Member please update Council on the new Collier's Wood library and how it will benefit the community?

Reply

Non ST Questions

The new library in Colliers Wood Library opened on Monday 5 February 2018. Residents will benefit from a modern, flexible library with more space for books and computers. The library has been designed with three flexible meeting rooms that can be used for a range of community events and a café is available.

The new building provides a sustainable library that will be enjoyed for generations to come. Building on the good work that the library service has been doing there will be a focus on work with children and young people and a broader offer for the rest of our residents including an increased number of events and activities.

Residents have been consulted throughout the building of the new library and have had the opportunity to feed into both the external and internal design elements. Working with the Alzheimer's Society the library has also been designed to be dementia friendly.

Supplementary

Thank you Madam Deputy Mayor. I would like to thank the Cabinet Member for his reply; can he please tell us about any further Culture and Leisure facilities that benefit Merton's residents please?

Reply

Thank you Madam Deputy Mayor and thank you Mary for your supplementary. There's loads, there's loads, but I'm only going to give you three. First of all, the new Morden Leisure Centre will be opening later in the year and it's going to be beautiful, but you know I've talked a lot about that already, I'm looking forward to you all finding out about it for yourselves; you will be amazed. Second of all, there is a whole range of activities at the Canons in Mitcham, following our very successful HLF bid, those will be happening over the next few years; look up the details for those, and third of all, I'm afraid I can't take an awful lot of credit for this, I pass the credit to our Leader for his tremendous work in this respect; we are going to be bringing AFC Wimbledon back to Merton and I think everybody should be very happy with that. Thank you very much.

From **Councillor Abigail Jones** to the **Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Environment and Housing**

Can the Cabinet Member please update Council on the development of the Wimbledon Plan?

Reply

The Council published the results of the Future Wimbledon workshops in September 2017 which set out the comments, maps, ideas and priorities from the local community and these have helped shape the content of the draft masterplan.

The draft masterplan is being finalised at the moment and will be available for consultation from late February 2018.

The draft plan sets out a vision for the future development of Wimbledon town centre and illustrates how the borough's existing planning policies will be applied to pre-application advice and planning applications between 2018-2020. The masterplan will act as interim planning guidance whilst Merton's new Local Plan is prepared. Any new planning policies or site allocations for Wimbledon will be progressed through the new local plan process.

Supplementary

Thank you Madam Deputy Mayor. Many residents have contacted me about Crossrail 2 and the concerns they have about the impact on Wimbledon Town Centre. Can the Cabinet Member inform the Council about why further proposals have been delayed, how long have residents been kept in the dark and what impact are those delays having?

Reply

I'd like to thank Councillor Jones in terms of its supplementary. It is regrettable that the consultation on Crossrail 2 has been delayed, originally we had hoped it would take place in the Autumn of 2016 but we are still to see it and I understand it may be another year before it takes place. It clearly has had an impact in terms of the Town Centre as we have been quite clear as an Authority, we support Crossrail 2 but not at any cost but we also recognise as well the considerable benefit Crossrail 2 will have to that Town Centre in terms of attracting businesses and creating jobs. We welcome that there has been more constructive talks of late between the Secretary of State Chris Grayling and Sadiq Khan but we understand that there will be an independent review that is taking place this year and I understand he will report back in the Autumn. We do hope Crossrail 2 does happen; Wimbledon is a great place and it would be even more enhanced by having better transport but also dealing with the huge capacity issues that do exist on current rail lines into Waterloo, but also the Northern Line in South Wimbledon and the District Line.

From **Councillor Janice Howard** to the **Cabinet Member for Street Cleanliness and Parking:**

Can the council confirm that all the Christmas trees were collected by their own deadline of 21st January?

Reply

The Christmas tree collections were completed on schedule with all roads visited by the collection crews over a two week period from 8th January. Residents were advised to present their Christmas tree for collection no later than the 8th January. In total over 95tonnes of Christmas trees were collected over the two week period. Residents are able to report any missed collections or newly presented trees via our contact centre who will arrange for this information to be allocated to the contractor for collection.

Supplementary

Thank you Madam Deputy Mayor. I thank the Cabinet Member for his answer., however there are Christmas trees in Wimbledon Park and across Wimbledon that still haven't been collected despite being put out before the allocated time, blocking pavements for pushchairs, elderly and disabled residents. Why hasn't the Cabinet Member ensured that tree collections are completed on time really, and is this just another example of the bad management of the Veolia contract by this Labour administration and what compensation will you be seeking from the Contractor as a result?

Reply

I'd like to thank Councillor Howard for her supplementary question. Within the supplementary Councillor Howard said that these trees were distributed onto the pavements, onto the roads; that's not the correct presentation – they needed to be inside the front garden not on the pavements because that would have blocked access. As an authority we've collected 95 tonnes of Christmas trees; 95 tonnes is the equivalent to the same weight of a Blue Whale. That's a lot of Christmas trees. And yes, whilst I admit there are some Christmas trees that are discarded irresponsibly on grass verges that's not how they should have been presented they should have been presented in the front garden from the 8th January through to the the period and where they haven't been collected from the front garden, Veolia have been told about this and they are endeavouring to collect the Christmas trees on the list and I would be happy to have that email forwarded to me and we can talk about this outside of the Council meeting because if it is presented correctly and the service isn't up to what it should be I want to know and I want to assist your residents in getting their tree collected.

From **Councillor Laxmi Attawar** to the **Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Environment and Housing**

What work has been undertaken by the council in encouraging modular housing developments?

Reply

Modular housing is one of the ways the government is encouraging the diversification of the housing market, to increase the number of new homes. Merton has led the way with the innovative partnership with YMCA to create Y-Cube in Mitcham, providing 36 affordable, energy efficient homes, which opened in 2015. We

Member Questions ST

are also in discussions with modular housing companies and registered providers about looking at options for its provision modular homes on suitable sites.

Supplementary

I'd like to thank the Cabinet Member for his answer and given the level of concern that we have raised about families living in temporary accommodation especially at Connect House in Mitcham, how will modular housing help to address housing needs in the Borough?

Reply

I'd like to thank to thank Councillor Attawar for his supplementary, Modular Housing would help address housing need because it is housing that can be put up quickly and rapidly. We have a huge crisis here in this City we've got 54,000 people living in Temporary Accomodation; that's 54,000 too many, we've got 200 households in Merton and even though that's a small proportion of that total, we want to have more places available so that people can actually live in this Borough and stay in this Borough. Because of rising demand and because of lack of housing many people unfortunately can't live in Merton so we want to provide more housing and Modular Housing is a way of utilising some small sites in the Borough to provide the much needed houses that people in this Borough so desperately need. Thank you.

From Councillor David Dean to the Cabinet Member for Street Cleanliness and Parking:

Can the Cabinet Member tell me what the council is doing to tackle the outbreak of rats around Wimbledon town centre?

Reply

Merton Council have, since December 2017 arranged for the installation of humane rat traps and burrow baiting in the shrubbery around Wimbledon Town Centre; particularly at Gladstone Road which has attracted most complaints. We have also worked with Love Wimbledon BID who have undertaken a lot of engagement with local business to ensure that food waste is properly sealed and disposed of to minimise the food-source available to rodents.

Supplementary

Thank you Deputy Madam Mayor, thank you very much for allowing me to speak this time. May I say I am honoured because this is the first time ever that my question has been answered. That doesn't mean I don't have a supplementary Madam Mayor, but it is a sensible response which means that I can speak sensibly back which is where we need to be. The question is, one of the reasons that we do have rats within Wimbledon Town Centre is food waste and most of the food waste comes from the Night Time Economy. I'm rarely out that time of night but when I am I am surprised how much is dropped and that is when the rats take hold. A number of bins have been taken out of Gladstone Road and Hartfield Road; my question is; will you consider putting them back for the residents? So there you are a sensible answer to my question and a sensible question back to the Cabinet Member.

Reply

Thank you to Councillor Dean for his supplementary; happy to consider that if he sends me an email with locations, I'll take that to officers.

From **Councillor Philip Jones** to the **Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Environment and Housing**

Following recent publication of the London Plan which doubled our housing target, how will the council set about meeting this revised figure?

Reply

The Council will be responding to the Mayor of London's London Plan consultation to ensure that the final adopted London Plan 2019 housing target for Merton is suitably ambitious but deliverable. Merton's current housing target is 410 homes per year and we have met this every year for the last 10 years. The new draft housing target is 1,328 homes per year. The council will explore sites and planning policies to deliver new homes as part of Merton's new Local Plan 2020.

Supplementary

Thank you Madam Deputy Mayor, I'm grateful to the Cabinet Member for his positive response to my question. I'd like to ask him, what thoughts he has on how we can ensure that we meet the increased number of houses and make the best utilisation of the sites we have in the Borough whilst at the same time ensuring that genuinely affordable housing is provided?

Reply

Can I take this opportunity of thanking Councillor Jones for his supplementary and on a personal note pay tribute to him, as this may be the last time he asks a question at an ordinary Council meeting, given his 47 years since he was first elected having been a member of every Labour administration that has been successfully elected here in Merton. In terms of his supplementary it is ambitious target to provide 410 homes but through the call for sites which we have had recently that we have had recently, developers, land owners, public bodies have actually bought sites forward and I think we do need to provide the housing in this Borough and we do need to provide more of it given the rise in demand but when we do provide housing we have to ensure that there is genuinely affordable housing provided, sometimes when we say affordable it may be outside the reach of ordinary people and I do have concerns about some of the shared ownership schemes, so it is important that that housing is accessible to people of all incomes but also as well in terms of the tenures as well both social rent, London living rent and also homes for shared ownership. So it is ambitious but it is important that this Council puts housing as one of its top priorities because it is something many residents in this Borough are crying out for more to be provided. Thank you.

From **Councillor Daniel Holden** to the **Cabinet Member for Street Cleanliness and Parking:**

Member Questions ST

What is the council doing to ensure the bins are collected on time?

Reply

Whilst a small number of missed collections will inevitably occur with any waste collection service owing to the volume of collections and the many circumstances that can arise across the borough, our officers work hard to keep the number of missed bins as low as possible.

Our teams work alongside our waste collection contractor to investigate waste collection issues in order to resolve them quickly for our residents. Our team, together with Veolia, liaise with managing agents and with residents to resolve issues. They do this by phone, email and face to face at site visits. The aim is to identify any underlying reasons why collections have been disrupted, and to resolve them. The data on missed collections continues to show an improvement thanks to this work. We also use the data to identify properties that have reported repeat missed collections so we can resolve them before they occur again.

Where missed collections have reoccurred at individual properties, Veolia can add that property to the assured collection service. This requires the crew to manually log the collection as completed into the integrated 'In Cab' devices. Where an 'Assured Collection' cannot be made the crew are required to document why the collection was not undertaken. This assists in monitoring the performance of the crews and ensuring problems do not continue.

Where the contractor exceeds the contractual threshold of missed collections, financial deductions are applied to the monthly invoices. This incentivises them to resolve issues and avoid missed collections.

To avoid problems with collections, we request residents place their bins out for collection by 6am on collection day. They can report missed collections and check their scheduled collection day on the Merton website:

<https://www.merton.gov.uk/rubbish-and-recycling/collection-days-and-times>

Supplementary

Thank you Madam Deputy Mayor. So thank you to the Cabinet Member for his answer; I wanted to ask him that over Christmas and New Year, at a time when many residents expect the service to be at its peak and operating well, why were wheeled bins from blocks of flats in particular from right across Merton missed repeatedly over a period of about four weeks? Was it something to do with the fact that Veolia weren't putting in staff over this period and was the Cabinet Member aware of this and what will he do to make sure this is not a problem this year at Christmas?

Reply

Thank you Councillor Holden for your supplementary question. There were a few changes in the way that Veolia operated communal waste collection, we are working with them to ensure that going forward this is minimised and doesn't happen again.

From **Councillor Stan Anderson** to the **Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Environment and Housing**

How is the council working with key partners including TfL on the regeneration of Morden, and what are the next steps in the process?

Reply

The council is has been having positive discussions with major land owners within Morden town centre, which includes TfL, and are working very closely with all the different specialist teams within TfL.

Consultants have provided advice on the delivery of the regeneration of Morden town centre, which included positive responses from potential development partners. Their findings were presented to local ward councillors and a report was presented to the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel and to Cabinet on 15 January 2018.

The Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel recognised the scale, impact and opportunities of the planned Morden Regeneration Project and recommended to Cabinet that Merton Council should maintain sufficient control of the project. Cabinet approved the report's recommendations and authorised officers to proceed with negotiations with TfL, to formulate an appropriate joint venture structure.

The council and TfL have completed a memorandum of understanding and project managers have been appointed to assist the council and TfL with the next steps; to prepare for the joint procurement of a development partner in September/October 2018.

After the appointment of the development partner, we will work up detailed plans in collaboration with residents, businesses, ward councillors and the development partners.

Supplementary

Thank you Madam Mayor I do have a supplementary. I thank the Cabinet Member for his written response. I welcome the discussion that has taken place between Merton and Transport for London. How can regeneration assist in improving public realm in Morden Town Centre and making it more accessible to pedestrian and public transport users?

Reply

I'd like to thank Councillor Anderson for his supplementary. I think he's actually quite right in terms of making Morden a more accessible Town Centre; when you arrive in Morden you are greeted by a wall of buses and it's not very inviting to actually stay here. We also look at the huge traffic gyratory system we have around the Civic Centre, again it's not particularly pedestrian or cycling friendly. So it is important that we obviously work closely with the Mayor because the Morden regeneration will be a huge transformation of that Town Centre but it also involves improving accessibility

to public transport here as well but also ensuring as well that the public rail improvements are actually made that makes it a more inviting destination but also as well that people are attracted to stay here rather than getting the first bus out of Morden.

From **Councillor Abdul Latif** to the **Cabinet Member for Street Cleanliness and Parking**:

Has the council performed a public health/environmental health impact assessment of its proposed new waste collection service?

Reply

There is no statutory requirement for a public health / environmental impact assessment. The collection service is similar to those used by many authorities across London and the country who use a combination of wheeled bins, alternate weekly collections with a weekly food waste service. The service is designed to be cleaner and safer than the current black bag service, which litters Merton's streets and attracts vermin, which tear open the bags. The service will also bring environmental benefits such as fewer vehicle movements, and the associated air quality benefits, and higher recycling rates.

An equalities impact assessment has been completed which has highlighted the need to undertake a review of existing waste policies to ensure that they support residents and address any concerns with the implementation of a wheeled bin collection service.

Merton Council will continue to offer an assisted collection service for those residents who are not physically or mentally able to present their bins for collections. This will ensure that elderly or disabled residents that meet the agreed criteria will not be expected to manoeuvre the bin ready for collection.

Supplementary

Thank you Madam Deputy Mayor. I also thank the Cabinet Member for his response. In recent months, I have had reports of maggots entering into residential properties from domestic refuse. They are understandably angry and expressed their concerns about public health. In view of the proposal for fortnightly collection of domestic waste and repeatedly missed collection of waste and the problem of nappies already voiced earlier by Mr John Tippet-Cooper during Public Questions, can the Cabinet Member advise how he will prevent such infestation of maggots in residential properties?

Reply

I'd like to thank Councillor Latif for his supplementary question. The simple answer is in two words; wheeled bins. They containerise waste so you don't have maggots crawling into peoples' properties out of the bins.

From **Councillor Geraldine Stanford** to the **Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Environment and Housing**

Following the recent completion of the Rediscover Mitcham project, will the Cabinet Member please give details of the improvements and benefits which have resulted from the works?

Reply

Merton Council and TFL have invested a significant amount of resources in Mitcham, from resident and business engagement, planning, funding and construction of the Rediscover Mitcham project.

The intention is to increase footfall in the centre, bringing 9 bus routes back through London Road, stopping outside the shops and cafes. We have increased and improved the open space, creating a square for a market and events and a bigger green space with feature lighting and seating areas. The café, Tag Aleez, has been improved with rebranding, new awnings and internal and external repairs and is now a vibrant location for residents to visit and linger. There have been other business premises improvements made to many of the shops which has included internal alterations and improvements and new fronts and signage to enhance the High street.

The project also involved restoration of Mitcham's glorious clocktower, a new suite of festive lighting, a dedicated location for Mitcham's Christmas trees, a programme of public art works and restoration of Three Kings Pond. The Fair Green has been re-shaped closer to its original layout and the perimeter lanes have been re-established allowing for short-term parking in the centre.

The overall intention is to make Mitcham a place where residents want to visit and shop and for businesses to want to locate as part of our overall inward investment plans.

The removal of the pedestrian zone with the introduction of the perimeter street with a limited time to park, has brought more direct access and convenience for shoppers, especially those with accessibility difficulties. This has also contributed in the business trade. All the surrounding signalised junctions have been modified with the introduction of shorter crossing points for pedestrians giving quicker and more direct routes. Cyclist facilities have been added to provide safer protection and desirable, segregated journey routes for cyclists. Vehicle traffic flows and queues have been reduced on most approaches and movements through the town centre by complete redesign of these junctions and their signals. Bus journey times are more reliable with the dedicated bus route.

The project completed in January 2018. It's too early to fully understand the impact of the project but anecdotal feedback to far is that people and businesses are happy with the quality of the public realm and business in London Road has picked up.

Supplementary

Thank you Madam Deputy Mayor and thank you to the Cabinet Member for his response. Could I take this opportunity of thanking officers for the successful

Member Questions ST

completion of the rediscover Mitcham project, ahead of schedule, might I add and particularly James Geeson who has led the project who I have harassed on a daily basis to make sure that everything has gone to plan, so special thanks to him. Can the Cabinet Member tell me how the improvements in the Town Centre will attract more business to the Town Centre?

Reply

Thank you and can I also take this opportunity of thanking Councillor Stanford and all of her Mitcham colleagues for their patience whilst the works have been ongoing in Mitcham. Obviously we are glad they are now completed. But going forward I think it is clear that we do need to attract more businesses and I think the public realm improvements are starting to have some impact, although we recognise we are in early stages because we want that to be key to bringing more investment, more jobs to the Town Centre, but also as well attracting businesses and having that mix, both retail and entertainment and cultural as well in Mitcham. Mitcham has a lot going for it, I've been proud to be a Mitcham Councillor for the last 16 years but we know that these develop one step further and I have no doubt that this regeneration will act as a catalyst to make those further improvements to ensure that Mitcham does grow and that Mitcham does prosper going forward. There's a lot been done but there's also a lot more to do and as Cabinet Member who will be pushing for more businesses to invest in the Town Centre. Thank you.

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