

Merton Council Council

6 February 2019

Supplementary Agenda 6

21 Public and Member Supplementary Questions and Responses 1 - 46

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**1. From: Matthew Conway
To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport**

Why are fees for residents parking permits not capped at the cost of administering the scheme and enforcement?

Reply

Resident permit charges have been frozen since 2009. We consider an appropriate price to be one that challenges motorists to consider other more sustainable and active (cycling and walking) forms of transport, but recognises the car in many cases can be useful.

The setting of parking charges, including resident permit charges can lawfully take into account the policy objectives of the Council in addition to the costs of running the service. Any surplus is used for transport purposes.

The cost of Residential Permits is one way the council can influence car/vehicle use within the borough and directly contribute to the Mayor's Transport Policy, Local Implementation Plan and Air Quality and Public Health objectives

**2. From: Tom Killick
To the Cabinet Member for Finance**

Will the Council make it a condition of major public events in the borough requiring their permission or which they themselves organise that such events be free of single-use plastics?

Reply

Whilst we support the general principle that events hosted in Merton should, as far as possible, be free from single-use plastics, it is not yet considered wise to enforce a complete ban, as some alternatives such as glass or metal would clearly not be appropriate. We would, nevertheless, work with event promoters and organisers and event caterers to encourage this approach insofar as practical and continue to review the industry in respect of market developments that encourage alternatives to plastic.

Supplementary

Thank you Madam Mayor and thank you Councillor for your answer. Can I ask the Councillor please to clarify in what circumstances, alternatives to plastic, such as glass or metal would clearly not be appropriate? Just as a supplementary wood is often an alternative to plastic, I find it hard to see why that would not be appropriate.

Reply

I thank him for his follow-up. I think that anybody who has been to any outdoor events across the Borough can see that having glass at those events would

obviously not be appropriate and so we would work with the event organisers to try and provide alternatives. However, all single-use implements whether they are made of wood or whatever, if they are just single-use and are not reused, they take up a large amount of resources to produce them if they are going to get thrown away immediately afterwards, so we have to use our common sense on these things as I'm sure he will understand, but we can't possibly have events where broken glass is scattered around or where tins and metals can be used as implements that would clearly create a public order problem.

3. From: Stuart Thomas

To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport

The 20 MPH speed limit has not stopped the constant speeding on Rowan Road, what enforcement measures are you going to take?

Reply

The 20mph speed limit on Rowan Road was introduced in November 2018 as part the borough's programme in rolling out a borough wide 20mph speed limit. The proposal is in line with Mayor of London's strategy and it is about changing driver behaviour – that is to say to encourage drivers to travel at a consistent lower speed not just throughout the borough but from borough to borough. The borough limit will work alongside neighbouring borough's 20mph speed limits. This is expected to bring about a culture change so that it is socially unacceptable to drive over 20mph in London. In 2018 the Council installed traffic calming measures such as chicanes and additional pedestrian crossing points to further reduce the ability of motorists to speed on Rowan Road. Although the enforcement of speed falls under Police jurisdiction, the recent interventions serves as a deterrent to speeding

4. From: Gemma Davies

To the Cabinet Member for Community and Culture

When will rubbish bins and dog waste bins be placed inside Rowan Park? There are only two bins inside the children's play area at one end of the park.

Reply

There are plans in progress to relocate the existing litter bins [we do not provide separate dog waste bins] in the park to ensure that they are more easily available to all parks users. However, we have no plans at the current time to increase the overall number of bins present. We consider that this park serves mainly a local usage and our policy on parks waste is to encourage users to take their litter home with them. Our contractor is aware of this position and contractually they are required to undertake litter picking tasks according to local needs. We will continue to review littering issues there together with our contractor given that this site is a new location for the Council, transferring in December 2018.

5. From: Laura Clague

To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration Housing and Transport

What are the council doing about all the empty and dilapidated houses and flats in Merton, with the housing crisis and level on homelessness this must not be ignored.

Reply

The Council is committed in meeting housing need locally and works in partnership with private sector owners and landlords to increase housing supply so as to prevent homelessness. The Council continues to maintain the lowest numbers of homeless households in temporary accommodation in London and homeless prevention plays an important role in achieving this outcome.

Where an empty property is identified the Council would seek to work with the owner as far as is reasonably practicable to bring the dwelling back into use

6. From: Joyce Pountain

To the Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Cleanliness

In September, Cllr Southgate asked about the weed-killer glyphosate and the alternative steam foam. What was the outcome of the contractor's review of glyphosate use? Also, of your investigation into Hammersmith & Fulham's use of steam foam. Since then, Richmond, Lambeth and Croydon have announced plans to go pesticide-free.

Reply

We continue to monitor the use of pesticides for weed control with both our grounds maintenance and street cleansing contracts

The EU renewed the licence for the use of glyphosate-based weed killers such as Round-up in 2017 until 2022. Under UK and EU law it is therefore certified safe to use when applied by qualified staff as per the manufacturer's instructions. Currently, our contractors, having reviewed matters, consider that the judicious use of glyphosate is the most cost-effective means of weed control available for their clients, so in the short to medium term they will continue to use glyphosate carefully and according to manufacturers' instructions and best practice

As far as glyphosate use in parks and green spaces is concerned, the contractual position with our grounds maintenance contractor remains that the policy is one of minimal use of herbicides and that herbicides should only be applied under exceptional circumstances. In practical terms, existing programmes for the control of Japanese Knotweed in the borough, for example, would be extremely challenging without the use of glyphosate.

7. From: Ravi Nathan

To the Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Cleanliness

When are the council going to do a better job of keeping the streets and parks in Colliers wood, south wimbledon and tooting cleaner? The place is filthy and its coming at a time where people are starting to move in and help regenerate the area.

Reply

Our street cleansing contractor, Veolia have implemented a neighbourhood approach to deliver the street cleaning operations. Each neighbourhood has an associated team of Veolia operatives and an Environmental Manager overseeing and co-ordinating their work. This approach contributes towards building knowledge and a sense of pride amongst the neighbourhood team. The Environmental Managers become familiar with the requirements of the area and apply their resources accordingly. The contract requires Veolia to maintain a consistent standard of cleanliness across the whole borough in line with best practice from Defra's Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse. This approach measures the contractor based on their output rather than the amount of resources they use or the frequency at which they clean the streets. In order to achieve the required standard, the contractor is required to apply whatever resources, at whatever frequency, are required to maintain the necessary contractual standards. In practice, this means the contractor will apply more resources to town centres than residential areas even though the contract requires the streets in both areas to be maintained to the same standard.

In order to hold the contractor to account we have implemented a Neighbourhood Client Team who undertake site inspections and work closely with the contractor's Area Managers to ensure that service standards are maintained and any rectifications are addressed in line with our contractual agreements. They also undertake visits and walk-about with local ward Members who have concerns about littering in their area in order to address the issues in a proactive manner. Can I thank residents for using the online reporting arrangements as this helps us to ensure we alert Veolia to areas requiring attention whether it is fly tipped material, or recent litter or any other environmental issue.

8. From: Andrew Biden To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration Housing and Transport

Please could the Council provide an update on the proposals (if any) to make Haydon's Road train station step-free on both platforms and, if so, the timescales for those proposals? Would the Council agree that this work was essential prior to the completion of the Plough Lane stadium?

Reply

The Council is not directly responsible for rail stations, Network Rail are. As part of the nearby development at 1 Caxton Road the Council negotiated the introduction of level access on the outbound line at the rear of that development proposal. However, whilst the physical level access was facilitated it is the responsibility of Network rail whether to fully implement that proposal and to date this has not been undertaken. It is agreed such access would be beneficial for the new stadium, however this was not identified as an essential requirement at the time, with TFL requesting contributions to improved bus services, which were secured. The Council's continues to lobby Network Rail for station improvements.

**9. From: John Tippett-Cooper
To the Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Cleanliness**

Can the council confirm that Veolia does not incinerate waste collected as recycling under Merton's contract managed by the South West London Waste Partnership. If it does, please detail and explain the volume of recycling waste disposed of in this way.

Reply

I can confirm that no material collected for recycling is sent for incineration. Veolia undertake the collection of our domestic waste following which it is sent for further processing through our disposal contract with Viridor. Under both these contracts all material collected as recycling is required to be segregated from the general waste stream and processed in the most environmentally friendly manner.

**10. From: Barry Smith
To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration Housing and Transport**

What practical solutions are the council putting in place to improve air quality near the proposed site of the new Harris Academy school on High Path and what measurable impact on air quality do they expect these to have?

Reply

We are working hard to ensure that steps are being taken to minimise and mitigate air pollution in the area. This area is subject to major redevelopment and there is a need to protect the existing school and the new Harris Academy.

Through the planning agenda the following measures will be secured through the Section 106 agreement and conditions attached to the planning permission granted to construct the school.

Legal agreement requirements:

1. Air Quality Contribution of £11,500 towards the Council's new Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) 2018-2022. The new school would be brought within the remit of this plan and part of the new AQAP is dedicated towards tackling air pollution around schools. The Environmental Health department will be "considering High Path as a potential site to implement the 'School Streets' initiative, this is where the road outside a school is closed to traffic at school opening and closing times. The contribution is for future monitoring which will determine impacts on air quality in the area". (Jason Andrews 12/11/2018).

The Council's Environmental Health Officer has also clarified that the contribution of £11,500 towards the Council's new AQAP to cover the Council's commitments to monitoring and taking action to reduce air pollution around schools. Monies would go towards monitoring, staffing and materials for Merton Abbey Primary School and the new Harris Academy. The Council will deliver 4 air quality audits in the area (to include monitoring) over the next 5-6 years

costing £2,800 per audit. They will be jointly linked to both schools as they are close and will impact upon each other. They will also share the same controls and behaviour change mitigation.

2. School Travel Plan (with monitoring fee of £2,000) to:
 - i. Promote awareness of transport issues and the impact of traffic on the local environment.
 - ii. Show a commitment to improving traffic conditions in the local area.
 - iii. Influence the level of private car journeys to and from the Development in order to reduce air pollution and the consumption of fossil fuels.
 - iv. Maximise the proportion of journeys to and from the Development by sustainable modes of transport such as walking, cycling and public transport.
3. Contributions to secure an additional bus route to serve the school to minimise use of private car.
4. Tree planting s.106 requirement for a contribution of £50,000 – in and around the site to help minimise air pollution.

Planning Condition requirements:

Condition 13 – Working Method Statement to include control of dust, small and other effluvia.

Condition 16 – Dust Management Plan to ensure impacts are minimised. This is to mitigate and monitor dust throughout the demolition and construction phase.

Condition 23 – Recommendations and measures in submitted Air Quality Report to be implemented (including mechanical ventilation).

Condition 28 – Solid fence with planting to minimise air quality impacts within the site.

Condition 30 – Secure cycle parking to reduce reliance on the private car.

The Pollution team are also working closely with Merton Abbey Primary school as part of the Mayor's School Air Quality Audit programme. The audit report contained a number of general recommendations that will need to be agreed between the School, the Council and the Greater London Authority.

Following initial discussions these are currently being agreed and include;

- Green screening and planting.
- Longer-term monitoring in and around the school grounds.
- Improved modal shift infrastructure, cycling and scootering.
- Anti-idling.
- Pedestrian only school's street consultation.
- Behavioural change measures in and around the school secured under the Air Quality Action Plan and include activities such as school travel plans, STARS (Sustainable Travel: Active, Responsible, Safe), auditing and public health initiatives.

Although it's difficult to provide an indication of the cumulative impact of these measures on air quality, officers are confident that there will be adequate protection around the school and monitoring of air quality in the area will be ongoing for many years.

In addition, we also have an air quality action plan which contains a number of measures to deal with air quality throughout the borough.

11. From: Shipra Gupta
To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration Housing and Transport

How many parking permits for diesel vehicles have been issued since the new levy was introduced, how has this changed since the introduction of the levy and how does the combined number of parking permits issued compare before and after the introduction of the levy?

Reply

This will be the subject of a review shortly to be undertaken. The Council took the bold decision to introduce the diesel levy surcharge in 2016. The emissions from diesel engines are known to be particularly harmful. The diesel levy along with emission-based charging will be considered. A report will be presented to Councillors in the Autumn of 2019 for consideration. Since the introduction in Merton a number of other London boroughs have followed Merton's lead with the aim of reducing diesel car use. Currently the diesel levy is only charged on Permits, but consideration will be given to extending this to pay and display parking and season tickets.

12. From: Klaartje Dresselaers
To the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health

What is the diagnosed incidence of asthma in children attending schools less than 150m from an illegally polluted road in Merton and how does this compare to the national average?

Reply

Unfortunately data is not currently available to answer this question directly. What we do know is the following:

- An illegally polluted road is a road which exceeds the annual mean EU limit value of 40 µg /m³ for NO₂ and/or 40 µg/m³ for PM₁₀ and 25 µg/m³ for PM_{2.5}. There is no known lower limit for PM which is safe because this depends on the composition of particles in the air.
- The current London Atmospheric Emissions Inventory (LAEI 2013) tells us that in 2013, 4 out of 73 Merton Schools (not including private nurseries) were located within 150 metres of a main road that was above the legal EU annual mean limit value for nitrogen dioxide. The 2013 LAEI was used as the basis for the Mayor of London's Schools Air Quality Audit programme 2017/18, which aims to help protect children from toxic air in London.¹

¹ Please note this information is accurate as of 2013. The London Atmospheric Emissions Inventory (LAEI) is currently being updated and the 2016 base year will be published later this year. Today there are 86 open schools in Merton and once the new LAEI is published it will be possible to re-

- There is no information readily available about the diagnosed incidence of asthma by school in Merton. Information is only held in GP records and children from any one school will be registered with many different GPs.
- We do have information on the number of hospital admissions of children aged 0-9 coded as asthma. There were 64 hospital admissions of children aged 0-9 coded as asthma in 16/17 (the latest year for which data is available). This is a 30% fall from the numbers in 13/14 and 14/15. However it is important to note that the number of hospital admissions is not an indicator of the incidence of asthma in children in the borough, much of which is treated in primary care settings in the community. We also suspect that deprived groups are significantly more likely not to report incidences of asthma, leading to underdiagnosed asthma incidence in deprived groups.

Please see Appendix 1 for further background information.

**13. From: Samantha MacArthur
To the Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Cleanliness**

What impact has the introduction of bulky waste charging had on the number of collections being booked and on the number of fly tipping incidents involving items eligible for bulky waste collection?

Reply

The chargeable bulky waste service was implemented from the 7th January this year, as such it is too early to analyse the data and identify trends in the take up of this service. With regard to impact on fly tipping, there is little if any correlation between charging for bulky waste and fly tipping. When we introduced the free charge we saw no impact at all and other waste authorities across London report the same position. We do not expect any further increase in fly tipping with this change.

**14. From: Suzanne Gale
To the Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Cleanliness**

Merton states “It is illegal to obstruct roads, pavements and footpaths. We can take legal action against people who cause them.” How has Merton addressed (legally or contractually) the chronic issue of Veolia leaving bins on the pavement after collection, which is both a Health and Safety and security risk?

Reply

The new wheeled bin service has maintained the curtilage collection approach rather than introduce a kerbside collection system. This is to ensure that our pavements are kept clear of refuse containers restricting access for pushchair / wheelchair users.

evaluate the number of schools located within 150m of a main road above the EU annual mean limit value for nitrogen dioxide.

As part of our monitoring process and to ensure high collection standards are maintained, the waste crews are required to return containers back to the curtilage of properties. In incidents where this has not been carried out fully and the containers not successfully returned to the edge of the property the crews are identified and the appropriate action taken. Residents should report any such instances via the Council contact centre or website.

Supplementary

I'd just like to ask in relation to not returning bins to properties; how often this would have to happen, either in a percentage wise or every week, for the Council to take this seriously and take further action rather than just report it to Veolia?

Reply

I'd like to thank Ms Gale for her original question and her supplementary question. This is something that we discuss regularly with Veolia, they know what should be happening, we know what should be happening and they need to be getting that message across to their operatives. They do have briefings, re-training sessions and they go out and observe as well, so we are working on it, it should be returned to the curtilage of the property, wheelie bins, and we're aware of the problems that it causes if it's not returned, so we are pressing them on that, they know that's the case and I sometimes go round and follow refuse trucks, not as a regular habit, but I do go round and follow and I am watching that as well to make sure that it happens.

15. From: Tamara Kohler To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration Housing and Transport

How is the borough measuring, monitoring and working to prevent vehicles idling their motors whilst stationary across the borough?

Reply

The Council has committed to an Air Quality Action Plan 2018-2023, within this Plan there is a firm commitment to tackle idling vehicles. Signage is currently being introduced at 20 locations throughout the borough including schools, level crossings and taxi ranks. Our pollution team has also submitted a bid to the Majors of London's Air Quality Action Fund (MAQF) for additional resources to tackle this problem. As part of this bid I have given a commitment to have an enforcement regime in place this year.

In addition to this we are planning a number anti-idling days aimed at tackling idling vehicles at schools, level crossings and taxi ranks.

16. From: Ursula Faulkner To the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health

What measurable changes in air quality in Merton have occurred over the last five and ten years, both overall and in the most polluted spots?

Reply

The council has been monitoring air quality in the borough for a number of years. Every year the council produces what's called an 'Annual Status Report' or (ASR) covering measured air quality within the borough. The reports is submitted to our governing body for air quality for approval (GLA) and published on the council's website for public information.

It's very difficult to cover such a broad question in a short, written response, so I would encourage you and to review the documents available to the public on the council's website to look at trends within the borough.

In general terms the borough fails the national objectives for air quality along busy main roads and has done so for many years, along with all London boroughs. The exceedances we see are almost entirely associated with traffic.

It is for this reason that the council is aiming measures around tackling emissions from the most polluting vehicles in the borough, such as the diesel levy and linking parking charges to toxic vehicle emissions.

In London over the past year or so we are starting to see slight decreases in nitrogen dioxide (NO₂). Air quality officers believe that this may be linked to the move away from diesel cars, although it is too early to say this for certain.

17. From: John Braithwaite To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration Housing and Transport

How is Merton monitoring bicycle use across the borough and measuring the impact on strategies to improve cycle and the (to be hoped) corresponding reduction in car usage?

Reply

The Council extensively draws on borough specific modal monitoring data provided by Transport for London (TfL) and transport trends contained in the Annual Travel in London Report. Additionally it references more generic Department for Transport (DfT) modal use/cycle specific data. TfL also provides modelled data on cycling potential in Merton. Mayoral strategies, such as the Mayor's Transport Strategy also provide a wealth of policy evidence on cycling that borough officers can draw upon. Merton has been rolling out a programme of cycle improvements aimed at increasing the modal share. Recent projects include segregated cycle lanes in Mitcham Town Centre, lighting in the Wandle Valley, junction and lane improvements to Croydon Rd and working with RBKT to deliver the Raynes Park-New Malden Quietway.

18. From: Brigid Finlayson To the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health

Does the Council accept that it has a moral and/or legal duty to protect the health and well-being of the people of Merton, and if so, will it demonstrate its commitment

by taking ambitious and immediate actions to bring down air pollution to legal levels, particularly from transport emissions?

Reply

The council recognises that it has a significant role in tackling the public health and air quality matters that face this and future generations. That is why the council took the bold step to introduce a diesel levy in 2016 and why we are now consulting on changes to parking charges to help create the behaviour change necessary to reduce air pollution and improve public health through increased active travel.

19. From: Pippa Maslin To the Cabinet Members for Regeneration Housing and Transport and Adult Social Care and Health

In line with the London Assembly, Lambeth Council, Bristol City Council, and a growing number of other councils, will Merton Council declare a Climate Emergency and review its current carbon reduction plans in order to become carbon neutral by 2030 and thereby help to limit global warming to 1.5°C?

Reply

The Council is wholly aware of the threat posed by global warming and is working hard to mitigate our own carbon footprint as well as establishing policies and actions to reduce the impact of Merton as a whole. Our response is embedded in a range of policies and actions including those around Transport, Flood and water management sustainable development Planning polices and our approach to energy. The planet faces an existential challenge and we agree that this is an emergency. We shall be considering our actions in support of the other authorities cited.

Supplementary

Thank you. At the last count, twenty one principal authorities, nine parish or town councils and indeed the London Assembly and the Mayor of London formally declared a Climate Emergency and are busy reviewing their carbon reduction plans accordingly. Thus I feel that it is extremely insufficient and disappointing for Merton Council to simply agree that the existential threat that we face is an emergency and to say that it will simply consider its actions in support of the authorities I've cited in my question. So my question is, why stop short of a formal declaration of a Climate Emergency?

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health

I thank you for your question and for your supplementary. We're not saying that we will stop short of saying that we are just saying we will review that and come back in due course.

**20. From: Julian Holliday
To the Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Cleansing**

Does Merton consider that merely pushing rubbish off the gutter grill and leaving it piled in the space in between grills as recently done in Caxton Road is proper cleaning of gutters? What is Merton doing to ensure Veolia cleans streets and gutters to a good standard of cleanliness?

Reply

This is unacceptable and is not in line with any agreement made with our contractor Veolia. I will ensure that this matter is raised directly with the Management team and the area monitored by the client team to ensure that there is no repeat of this practise when undertaking gully cleaning.

Can I thank residents for using the online reporting arrangements as this helps us to ensure we alert Veolia to areas requiring attention whether it is fly tipped material, or recent litter or any other environmental issue.

Supplementary

Thank you. I would just like to ask why complaints of failures to provide services such as proper street cleaning are simply reports and not complaints?

Reply

I'd like to thank Mr Holliday for his question and supplementary. The idea of a report is that it can be rectified. If it's not rectified then it escalates to a complaint I would say, but because the idea of a reporting system is that Veolia have an opportunity within a timescale to rectify the situation, so it's reporting it and rectifying it, if it's not rectified then it becomes a complaint.

**21. From: Eve Cohen
To the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance**

Does the council recognise the inadequacies of its online facility for reporting litter, flytipping and street cleaning? The system is poorly designed, archaic, cumbersome, slow, and provides no feedback on expected action timeframe or completion. It also often fails or times out when trying to upload a photo.

Reply

We are disappointed that your experience does not mirror many others that have utilised the transactional elements within our online waste service. While the last full month of data available (December 2018) shows that the percentage of street cleaning reports made online increased by 14% from the same month a year before, the Council acknowledges that there remain areas where the online facility can be improved. The Council is undertaking a programme of work to enhance and improve existing online transactions, refine and increase the resilience of the technical functionality implemented, and deliver additional online transactions. As part of this

work we will display the anticipated timeframe for completion of each action at the end of the reporting process for all street cleaning processes. We continue to investigate the options for giving customers feedback on the progress/outcome of reports but are currently unable to give a timeframe for when this will be ready for deployment.

Photos can be uploaded successfully as long as they are within the stated size limit (2.3MB). The limit is a technical constraint with our waste contractor's operating system.

Supplementary

Thank you Mayor and thank you to the Cabinet Member for Finance for the response to my initial question. I'd like to ask why do Veolia not appear to have the reference numbers and the corresponding report locations for reports made online and why do I have to keep reporting the same issues again and again before they get cleared, for example street cleaning and leaf mulch in gutters and blocked drain grills.

Reply

I'd like to again thank her for her follow-up. Clearly the subject of the meeting following surrounds the issue of street cleaning and reporting and it will be an opportunity for us to talk about the improvements that have happened on the street scene as a result of moving to wheeled bins and replacing the black bin bags that used to split open. However, when there are problems we do clearly need a reporting mechanism and we are working with the provider to change that over time to respond to the changing needs. Clearly it appears now that the greatest demand is to report things like fly tipping, which may have been different to how it would have been in the past, so as the system and as the implementation of the contract continues therefore we will need to evolve and amend the reporting system as well and we will continue to do that.

22. From: Hugo Forshaw To the Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Cleanliness

How quickly does the Council expect car use to drop as a result of increasing parking charges in the borough and therefore how quickly does the council expect revenue raised from this source to return to current levels?

Reply

Our calculations have been based on an immediate reduction in car use and number of Permits sold. The council does not desire car use and ownership to increase in the future. Even with the projected reduction in car use and ownership the proposed increased in charges will, we estimate, show a net surplus on existing budgets of £1.9million for 19//20 and an additional £1.9 for 20/21.

23. From: Dan Goode
To the Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Cleanliness

Every week the same roads - e.g. Morden Hall Road, Haydons Road - have to be reported by residents because they are filthy, and yet week after week Veolia fails to tackle these litter hotspots. After 21 months in the contract why is Veolia still not providing an adequate service?

Reply

Our Neighbourhood Client team regularly monitor these areas along with joint inspection with Veolia's Environment Managers. The information is collated and if required the schedule can be amended in order that the streets are cleaned to a required frequency and ensure that they do not fall below grade. This will be investigated and action taken to ensure the required standard is met. Can I thank residents for using the online reporting arrangements as this helps us to ensure we alert Veolia to areas requiring attention whether it is fly tipped material, or recent litter or any other environmental issue.

Supplementary

Councillor Brunt, just responding to your answer to my question, thank you. Just responding to your question, if the Neighbourhood Client Team and Veolia's environmental managers regularly monitor litter hotspots in the Borough, why have residents like myself been reporting the same areas week in week out since Veolia took over the waste contract twenty two months ago? Is this not proof enough that the safeguards you mention and the service in general are not adequate?

Reply

I thank Mr Goode for his question and supplementary question. We are working to improve the service and that is why we are taking on three more street cleansing monitoring officers from the Councils' point of view in addition to the three client management officers we have already and the two extra ones we took on that will put eight into the team. So the monitoring and performance management of the contract is something we take seriously and that will give us the opportunity to monitor that more. I am aware of some of the issues he is referring to on Haydons Road, living not far from there myself so I do see it, but we are working on that. Haydons Road comes with specific problems because the wheeled bin service will not be appropriate or is not appropriate to everyone there and so we're trying to find solutions for that.

24. From: Luke Taylor
To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration Housing and Transport

What is the council's response to the proposed expansion of Heathrow airport, what does the council expect the impact on Merton residents to be of the new and revised flight paths, and what steps are the council putting in place to mitigate any adverse impact on residents?

Reply

The Council recognises the potential environmental impact that comes with airport expansion. We are engaging in the consultation on flight paths to better understand what the impact might be on the borough and have publicised the consultation on our website. Our response will be based on the evidence presented and the noise impacts on residents.

25. From: Lesley Sorrell To the Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Cleanliness

How does Veolia supervise the work of its staff to ensure they are doing their job thoroughly?

Reply

Each operational crew is supervised by the appropriate Environment Manger responsible for the geographical area in which they work. Veolia use a number of reporting tools to monitor the efficiency of the crews and the quality / accuracy of their work. All areas of underperformance are addressed and the crews required to revisit any areas of work not completed prior to undertake the next scheduled work.

Supplementary

My original question was how does Veolia supervise the work of its staff and you replied that each crew is supervised appropriately by an Environmental Manager. I still have to keep reporting these sites, I'm wondering how many Environmental Managers you have and how do we recognise them?

Reply

I'd like to thank Ms Sorrell for her original question and her supplementary. Veolia's Environmental Management Team are sometimes out monitoring people they can't monitor all the teams all the time and the nature of managing a remote workforce is something I'm familiar with from my previous jobs as well. So they won't necessarily be recognisable to the public but they are certainly recognisable to the teams and they're out there and they are working to improve the performance of those out on the street.

26. From: James Oliver To the Cabinet Member for Community and Culture

16 months after an 'opening' event, Morley Park remains closed. A 22 year lease is proposed instead of freehold transfer. What will the terms of the lease and any other legal agreements be on: obligations to provide public access, maintenance and any park areas enclosed within the adjacent development site.

Reply

Morley Park was negotiated with Berkeley Homes by Merton Officers as a generous gift to the people of Merton. This has not been an easy task; and protecting local properties from the effects of Japanese Knotweed, and the Council from any claims resulting from it, has been a priority for the last 18 months. The Council has not abandoned the freehold transfer. The 22-year lease contains a clause that will require the freehold to be transferred to the Council. It is simply a measure to protect the Council against any claims arising from Japanese Knotweed by ensuring that any Japanese Knot weed that is present is treated comprehensively before the freehold is transferred to the council. In the meantime the council will be responsible for maintaining the park in the same way as if they had taken a transfer of the freehold; the Ursuline School will be able, at last, to play games on its fields; and the people of Merton and beyond will enjoy its beautiful facilities in exactly the same way as if the land belonged to the Council outright. The Council has pursued this solution to protect the interests of council tax payers by ensuring we do not take on a financial liability without properly seeking mitigation and protection.

Supplementary

In your reply to my question you say that under the terms of the proposed lease the people of Merton will be able to enjoy Morley Park's facilities as if the land belonged to the Council, please can you confirm that what you mean by this is that under the lease, the public will have the same degree of access as envisaged under the freehold transfer, namely access to all parts of the park at all times except the playing fields when they are in use?

Reply

I thank you very much for your question and for your supplementary. The answer to that is absolutely, yes.

27. From: Christopher Dizer To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration Housing and Transport

How is the Council planning to tackle the air pollution in Wimbledon Town Centre which is almost totally caused by non resident traffic driving through the Centre, example being the large Cappagh lorries which use it as their main access route?

Reply

Wimbledon Broadway is a London Distributor Road, a bus route and primary emergency route and is designated to take the bulk of through traffic. This situation is mainly historic, as the only road crossing over the railway is Wimbledon Bridge; therefore, it's the only option at present for any traffic to traverse Wimbledon

The Air Quality Action Plan identifies a number of measures that we can and will be taking to tackle this problem. Wimbledon Town Centre is what's referred to as an 'Air Quality Focus Area' and as such will require more attention in terms of air quality actions. We have made a commitment to review these areas from April 2019.

The pollution team has applied for grant funding from the Mayors Air Quality Fund for a project aimed at around reducing commercial deliveries in Wimbledon Town Centre.

We also need to be careful around identifying polluting vehicles, particularly emissions from the tail pipe. Large newer commercial diesel vehicles have significant emission abatement technology as part of their exhaust systems, so often a family diesel car can produce more nitrogen dioxide than a large commercial vehicle. This was also a finding outlined in our scientific work around the implementation of a diesel levy in the borough.

The Future Wimbledon masterplan has identified opportunities for addressing through traffic routes, but the infrastructure solution is long-term.

**28. From: Justin Shaw-Gray
To the Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Cleanliness**

Our streets are disgusting and not safe. There is broken glass, flytipping and litter and months go by before it is cleaned. It's now a health and safety issue. Wandsworth is a million times better. After 18 months of begging, will the council sort this out?

Reply

Our Neighbourhood Client team undertake regular inspections in order to hold the contractor to account. Reports of littering and fly tipping are logged and regularly inspections are undertaken by both the client team and Veolia's Environment Managers. The information is collated and if required the schedule can be amended in order that the streets are cleaned to a required frequency and ensure that they do not fall below grade.

Can I thank residents for using the online reporting arrangements as this helps us to ensure we alert Veolia to areas requiring attention whether it is fly tipped material, or recent litter or any other environmental issue.

**29. From: Allan Kerr
To the Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Cleanliness**

What number of staff does the council employ to monitor the contract with Veolia, to ensure the contractor meets the requirements of the contract and what deductions have been made to Veolia for their failure to meet the contractual standards?

Reply

The Council currently employs 2.8 Full time Equivalent permanent Neighbourhood Client Officers to monitor and manage the contracts with Veolia and IdVerede. We have recently supplemented this with an additional 2 staff temporarily whilst the wheeled bin rollout was underway. We are also planning to employ short term an additional 3 street inspectors from February 2019 to assist with this task.

The matter of deductions to the contract is confidential as it is commercially sensitive whilst they are unresolved. Once they have been finalised they will be reported in public and then annually.

Supplementary

Thank you very much for the reply to my question but it does seem pretty obvious that the Council's acting late and in arrears on this whole Veolia contract and the news that additional staff are being employed is excellent. However the management of this contract seems to have been very sloppily undertaken. My supplementary question is how many, what are the plans for enforcing in the next three months or so all the failed pick up of litter and tidiness that have not been done in the last six months or more?

Reply

I'd like to thank Mr Kerr for his original question and his supplementary. With the employment of more resources or more people out there able to go out and inspect when street cleanliness issues are reported then I am anticipating there will be an improvement in that and the response rate and the contract management there. When it comes to fly tips which is something close to many of our hearts, at the moment, for those that are reported online or through our call centre, we're experiencing an 89% success rate of them being cleared within the timescale specified in the contract. So I believe there has been an improvement over the last few months and it will continue to improve.

30. From: Emma Sutton To the Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Cleanliness

What are the start and end dates of the 10 week annual leafing plan for this winter 2018-2019? Is there a schedule for leaf clearing and how do Merton Council and Veolia monitor the leafing plan and the state of the streets, pavements and gutters?

Reply

Our contract with Veolia provides for additional capacity to collect and dispose of leaves during the Autumn/early winter. This 'leafing season' runs for ten weeks starting at an agreed point between October and November and finishing in December/January. Exact dates are flexible due to the seasonal factors that can affect leaf fall.

Given the relatively mild weather we experienced this autumn we delayed the start of the service until the middle of November.

In addition to regular cleansing operations, additional autumn leaf clearance is undertaken. Our leafing plan document lists those roads that historically have experienced heavy leaf fall or have been prone to flooding in adverse weather conditions. The plan allows for two visits across the ten week period by the leafing

resource to each of the roads listed in the plan. The leafing schedule is neither exclusive nor exhaustive and other locations will be cleared as required. All roads continue to be cleansed on the normal cleansing schedule.

31. From: Richard Shillito
To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration Housing and Transport

What steps is Merton taking to facilitate and encourage the roll out of cleaner buses across the borough?

Reply

Transport for London are the commissioning agent for London Buses. Whilst the Council generally supports proposals contained in the Mayor Transport Strategy to clean the bus fleet, it believes the target of doing this in outer London by 2041 is not ambitious enough. Over the years the council has and will continue to lobby TfL and London Mayor to see this target brought forward and for more all electric buses to be placed on outer London Streets sooner.

32. From: Suzanne Grocott
To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration Housing and Transport

The Business Plan 2019-2023 shows £1.9m revenue budgeted by a significant increases in parking/ CPZ costs for which monitoring to judge success will only take place after implementation. Please would the Cabinet member provide the base measurements against which change in behaviour will be monitored.

Reply

Ultimately, the outcome we are aiming for is improved health and wellbeing of our residents, visitors and those who work in the borough. We know this will take time and effort from many other organisations. Merton are however committed to do what we can. There are some things we can measure to make sure we focus on developing a more sustainable transport strategy over the coming years which include.

- Reduction in congested areas of our High Streets.
- Reduction in CPZs / Permits issued, including visitor permits, including
 - Reduction in multiple permits sold in the same house,
- Reduction in the number of season tickets sold.
- Investment in infrastructure and sustainable transport solutions.
 - Number of additional Electric Charging bays.
 - Number of additional cycle routes
 - Number of additional cycle parking facilities
- Greater use of Public Transport journeys within the borough.
- Increase in the number of 'active transport' activity in the borough.
 - Number of walking journeys in the Borough
 - Number of cycling journeys in the Borough
- Public Health.
 - Along with Air Quality a key objective is to contribute towards improved Public Health of Merton and London's residents. There are many

factors beyond our control but we are committed to working with colleagues in Public Health and shall monitor progress.

Supplementary

Thank you Madam Mayor. I'd like to thank the Cabinet Member for his answer to my question, but with only 1.6% year on year falling new car sales and electric cars still at only about 6.8 of market share, will the Cabinet Member agree with the general sentiment that the hike in CPZ charges is nothing but yet another stealth tax on the residents of Merton who have cars, irrespective of how much walking running or cycling they may do?

Reply

Thank you, and I'd like to welcome Councillor Grocott back to the Council Chamber after her enforced departure last May, former Councillor Grocott. In terms of that I don't actually agree with the comments that she has made in relation to this, as a Council we do see that there is an emergency in terms of air quality in the Borough and in terms of emissions and we do want to encourage greater use of electric cars. It's now at 6.8% but it is now actually growing very rapidly within this Borough. We believe that the proposals made are fair and actually will help and assist in actually the reduction of car usage in this Borough which we think is absolutely paramount and encourage more people to use public transport and also in terms of the take up of zero emissions cars, electric cars and also as well people to use their bikes. Thank you.

33. From: Rudi Leoni To the Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Cleanliness

After a street cleaning or flytip report is made (via telephone or 'report-it' online), is an assessment required by Veolia or a council officer before the issue is progressed for rectification, or are all logged service failures immediately placed on veolias to do list and deadline for rectification starts?

Reply

Following a report of a street cleansing issue or fly tipping this information is processed through our CRM system which is integrated with our contractor and a service request is created for the contractor to attend and resolve. There is no requirement for a separate inspection to be undertaken by a council officer before the task is created.

With regards to the rectification period this is measured as part of our Service Performance Indicators (SPI) and is calculated from the time the request was first record.

The contractor is required to achieve grade A standard at the time of cleaning. In order to hold the contractor to account our client team undertake inspection and monitor the performance standard being achieved.

34. From: Jane Barnes
To the Cabinet Member for Community and Culture

Will there be a binding and irrevocable commitment on Berkeley Homes to transfer the freehold of Morley Park to the Council at the end of the proposed 22 year lease, subject only to the Council's acceptance, and what form would any such commitment to transfer the freehold take?

Reply

The lease will contain a binding commitment subject only to the council's acceptance to transfer the freehold to the council. This commitment will be in the form of an option agreement which the council can exercise at any time in the final 24 months of the lease.

35. From: Emma Maddison
To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration Housing and Transport

How does the Council propose to measure the success of their plan to massively increase parking charges in certain areas of the borough?

Reply

Ultimately, the outcome we are aiming for is improved health and wellbeing of our residents, visitors and those who work in the borough. We know this will take time and effort from many other organisations. Merton are however committed to do what we can. There are some things we can measure to make sure we focus on developing a more sustainable transport strategy over the coming years which include.

- Reduction in congested areas of our High Streets.
- Reduction in CPZs / Permits issued, including visitor permits, including
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- Greater use of Public Transport journeys within the borough.
- Increase in the number of 'active transport' activity in the borough.
 - Number of walking journeys in the Borough
 - Number of cycling journeys in the Borough
- Public Health.
 - Along with Air Quality a key objective is to contribute towards improved Public Health of Merton and London's residents. There are many factors beyond our control but we are committed to working with colleagues in Public Health and shall monitor progress.

36. From: Nicola Thompson
To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration Housing and Transport

Could you confirm that the Council will NOT be offering free parking in Council car parks in the 2019 pre-Christmas period? Also, that it will be promoting access to the tennis championships by sustainable means rather than making car parking its premier focus (see current webpage 'Wimbledon tennis spectator parking')?

Reply

The Council will be reviewing the effect of this for the Xmas 2018 period and will advise Members before a decision is taken. We will always seek to strike an appropriate balance between sustaining business whilst encouraging reduced reliance on the motor vehicle

We will continue to work closely with the AELTC to encourage sustainable transport options are used as much as possible for the annual tennis championships and that the arrangements are consistent with a world class tournament showcasing the borough.

37. From: Geoff Cooper To the Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Cleanliness

What changes in air quality has Merton measured in the vicinity of the Beddington Energy Recovery facility since it became operational?

Reply

The Energy Reclamation Facility is closely regulated by the Environment Agency (EA) and stack emissions are continuously monitored and reported to the EA in 'real-time'. It is intended that the stack emissions will not negatively impact the borough. The Environmental Impact Assessment identified pollution from associated traffic as the potential risk from the facility.

Sutton Council has two continuous air quality monitoring stations near the facility which provide data to the London Air Quality Network, a public site openly accessible: www.londonair.org.uk

Officers from Merton have identified this facility as a new potential source of pollution in the borough and declared this as part of our Annual Status Report, this will then need to be considered by officers as part of the annual air quality review process.

Officers are also working with colleagues in Sutton through the South London Air Quality Cluster Group to discuss and review these cross-border concerns.

It is simply too early to tell but officers are confident in the control measures associated with the facility.

Locations of monitors.

- ST5) Beddington Lane North at Junction of Brookmead Road & Beddington Lane, Sutton. Species Monitored: Nitrogen Dioxide and PM10, PM2.5 Particulates (more details [here](#))
- (ST8) Beddington Lane at Prologis Park, 140-142 Beddington Lane.

38. From: Sara Sharp To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration Housing and Transport

Can the Council outline what specific steps it will take to ensure that Merton Abbey Primary School and its children are not affected and unduly harmed by pollution and noise resulting from demolition and construction of the new Harris School adjoining it? No conditions in application approval dealing with that.

Reply

Planning Conditions regarding the mitigation of construction impacts for Harris Wimbledon (18/P1921) are clearly set out in the Planning Application Committee Report of 15th November and specifically:-

Condition 13 – Working Method Statement to include control of dust, small and other effluvia.

Condition 16 – Dust Management Plan to ensure impacts are minimised. This is to mitigate and monitor dust throughout the demolition and construction phase.

<https://democracy.merton.gov.uk/documents/s25394/Harris%20Academy.pdf>

The Council, upon receipt of a Construction Management Plan, will consider the proposed measures in due course.

Appendix 1: Background info

- A report by the Royal College of Physicians (RCP) and the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH) states “there is increasing evidence of air pollution having a potential role in causing asthma, especially in people who live near busy roads, as well as being a trigger that can make an asthmatic’s symptoms worse”. For example, a study of child health in California found that being exposed to more NO₂ was associated with the onset of asthma. Evidence suggests that air pollution has an adverse effect on the health of children who spend more time outside and who therefore have a higher risk of being exposed to air pollution. In 2015 nearly a quarter of all schoolchildren in London were exposed to illegal levels of air pollution.²
- Air pollution can exacerbate asthma among people who already have it because air pollutants cause irritation and inflammatory responses of the airways and this causes bronchoconstriction³ (the constriction of the airways in the lungs.)
- Merton along with nearly all London boroughs continues to breach the legally binding air quality limits for both nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and particulate matter (PM₁₀). The air quality monitoring network run by Merton has shown that the UK annual mean NO₂ objective (40µg/m³) continues to be breached at a number of locations across the borough including Colliers Wood, Morden, Tooting and South Wimbledon. In some locations the NO₂ concentration is also likely to be in excess of the UK 1-hour air quality objective (200µg/m³ not to be exceeded more than 18 times per year) which indicates a risk not only to people living in that area but also for those working or visiting the area.
- There are inequalities in access to clean air in London. Research by the GLA in 2010 found that 433 out of 1777 primary schools in London were in locations where average concentrations exceed the NO₂ EU limit. 82% of the 433 schools were schools in areas of deprivation.⁴

² Royal College of Physicians. February 2016. *Every breath we take: the lifelong impact of air pollution*. Available from: <https://www.rcplondon.ac.uk/projects/outputs/every-breath-we-take-lifelong-impact-air-pollution> Original source of Californian Children’s Health Study available here: Chen Z, Salam MT, Eckel SP, Breton CV, Gilliland FD. Chronic effects of air pollution on respiratory health in Southern California children: findings from the Southern California Children’s Health Study. *J Thorac Dis* 2015;7:46–58.

³

<https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140505112255/http://www.comeap.org.uk/images/stories/Documents/Statements/asthma/does%20outdoor%20air%20pollution%20cause%20asthma%20-%20comeap%20statement.pdf>

⁴Updated Analysis of Air Pollution Exposure in London. Report to Greater London Authority. February 2017. Available from:

https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/aether_updated_london_air_pollution_exposure_final_20-2-17.pdf

- Concentrations of NO₂ fall off quickly from distance to source, so even where schools are sited on main roads, buildings may well be set far back enough from the road to comply with EU limit values.
- It is important to consider children's home address as children may live on or near a highly polluted road. The actions in Merton's Air Quality Action Plan will focus on the Air Quality Focus Area and pollution 'hotspots' in Merton.
- Brexit would mean the UK will have no legally binding commitment to meet the EU directive and a replacement regulatory and legislative structure will be put in place through the new Environment Bill.
- Improving air quality is a priority of Merton Council and Public Health teams and Air Quality teams are working together to take action. Priorities in [Merton's Air Quality Action Plan](#) include: The priorities for the new AQAP 2018-2023 particularly relevant to schools include but are not limited to:
 - *Establish and maintain an effective air quality group to ensure that the implementation of AQAP measures is coordinated effectively between relevant Council services;*
 - *To identify the key causes of traffic congestion within our Air Quality Focus Areas and pollution 'hotspots' and to determine effective measures for improving traffic flow through those areas using detailed air quality and traffic management modelling tools;*
 - *To evaluate the air quality benefits and feasibility of introducing 'mini' Ultra-Low Emission Zones in the areas of the borough identified as having the poorest air quality;*
 - *To formalise anti-idling enforcement in order to minimise emission from vehicles around key locations such as schools, taxi-ranks, Air Quality Focus Areas and hotspots;*
 - *To continue to work with schools, parents and students to improve awareness of AQ and to optimise parents' and children's desire and opportunity to adopt sustainable travel options;*
 - *To review Merton's air quality monitoring network to ensure that it effectively identifies areas of poor air quality, and provides accurate data to enable us to evaluate air quality trends and the impact of AQAP measures.*
- More data is available from Merton Council's annual air quality reports which are available on the Council's website:
<https://www.merton.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/pollution/air-quality-and-air-pollution/local-air-quality-management>

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From Councillor David Chung to Cabinet Member for Education

Given coverage of the national issue of racist bullying in schools, can the Cabinet Member tell us to what extent is this the case in our schools in Merton?

Reply

Merton schools continue to run a voluntary scheme to report racist incidents. Not all of these will be racist bullying. Data up to 2016 – 17 is available and shows an overall flat position from 2015 – 2016 with a rise in primary schools.

Number of Racist Incidents	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Primary Schools (including academies)	101	94	70	120	73	89
Secondary Schools (including academies)	68	41	32	51	53	46
Special Schools, Pupil Referral Unit & Virtual School	14	27	10	12	22	21
Total Racist Incidents in Merton Schools	183	162	112	183	148	156

(Results from 77% of schools in 2016-17)

The majority of incidents were of the types 'Racist comments and ridicule of culture' (74%). There were 2 incidents in the new reporting category of "Racist abuse online or by text"

Outcomes of racist bullying are monitored by School Improvement and schools are given advice as to what and where they could seek preventative workshops for pupils/students e.g. Show Racism the Red card, Equaliteach. The team also deliver CPD for teaching staff on challenging derogatory language which includes racist language.

Safer Merton have recently funded an " Agents for change" project , delivered by Equaliteach and the "Muslim Women of Merton" to combat Islamaphobia. This project involves 6 schools and 24 pupils/students who attended a workshop day with

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their teachers last week at Abbotsbury school. They have an action plan to take back to school and will be supported to complete their actions by Equaliteach and MWM over the coming Spring and Summer terms.

In relation to our general work to support schools to deal with bullying appropriately there is an anti-bullying operational group which has led on:

- Model policy to schools based on latest research and guidance including feedback from young people.
- Model incident form which supports the analysis of bullying incidents
- Promotion of the All Together programme – DfE funded programme to ensure effective whole school anti-bullying practice – this will be offered again this academic year.

Ten schools have so far successfully completed their quality mark with the All Together Program which looks at good practise in anti bullying.

Holy Trinity C of E Primary School	Gold
Links Primary School	Gold
St Mark's Primary School	Gold
The Priory C of E Primary School	Gold
Haslemere Primary School	Gold
Lonesome Primary	Gold
St John Fisher RC Primary	Gold
Melrose School	Silver
The Sherwood School	Silver
Aragon Primary School	Gold

Supplementary

Yes Madam Mayor I do have a supplementary question and it is as follows; Is there a plan of action for the remainder of Merton Schools to complete the equality mark with the All Together Programme?

Reply

I thank Councillor Chung for his original and his supplementary questions. Schools volunteer to take part in the All Together Programme but I am delighted to say that

we've received funding from the Department of Education so that another group of schools in Merton will be taking part in that programme this year. Thanks.

From Councillor Thomas Barlow to the Cabinet Member for Community Safety Engagement and Equalities:

Can the Cabinet Member provide an update on what steps have been taken since the council adopted the Social Mobility pledge?

Reply

The Workforce Strategy board has agreed to support work experience which will be offered to all Merton schools and young people who are residents in Merton.

As part of the Council's apprenticeship scheme there is a criteria for entry level apprenticeships:

Eligibility criteria.

To be eligible to apply for the scheme candidates must be

- Aged 16-24
- Eligible to work in the UK
- Without a degree or professional qualification
- Willing to undertake an NVQ level 2 or 3

Priority (but not exclusivity) will be given to Merton residents to support local economic development. A Merton resident is defined as

- Any person currently residing within the Local Authority area.
- Any person who is or was previously looked after by the Local Authority or who was subject to supervision, care order or child protection plan regardless of their current place of residence.

Non-residents who have a link to the borough would also be considered next.

- Any person who has previously resided within the Local Authority area and still has family links within the Local Authority.
- Any person who resides in a neighbouring Local Authority and completed their education within the London Borough of Merton.

The next priority would be given to people in neighbouring Local Authorities to support local economic development and finally anyone else provided they can travel to and from the borough to complete the apprenticeship

In relation to social mobility of older people in the community, the recruitment service in the Council will

- seek to withhold protected characteristics, name and educational establishments to ensure the potential bias from the process, and determining age of candidates .

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- introduce diversity in panel representation for senior appointments and this can be done by panel participation or introducing stakeholders' panels.
- sample checks will be introduced to ensure all shortlisting and interview panel members have up-to-date recruitment and selection training

Many of these actions are already in place, particularly in CSF, but need to be incorporated into an overall action plan.

Supplementary

Thank you to the Cabinet Member for her response. At the last meeting of this Council all parties backed practical steps to improve social mobility in the Borough. With this in mind, will she commit to establishing a working group to ensure that the Social Mobility Pledge is properly adopted and the commitments made are delivered?

Reply

Yes I agree with what you've just said, thank you for your supplementary question and also for your original question.

From Councillor Ben Butler to Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport

Can the Cabinet Member update us on the High Path regeneration?

Reply

The regeneration of High Path, Ravensbury and Eastfields will deliver 2,550 homes over 10-15 years, approximately half of which will be replacement homes for existing residents. This represents a very significant investment in improving homes, providing new parks and green spaces, business and community space and improving the quality of life for existing and new residents in Merton. High Path in particular will create an extra +600 additional homes, provide a new public park and space for small shops, workshops, offices and other businesses.

Phase 1 of High Path (134 new homes fronting High Path) already has planning permission. Following a thorough investigation guided by archaeologists from Historic England, work is starting on site and it is expected that these homes will be built in the next 18 months, so that existing residents can move into them. Later in 2019 Clarion Housing Group are due to submit planning applications for phase 2 for public consultation.

Supplementary

Thank you Madam Mayor and thank you to the Cabinet Member for his answer. Would the Cabinet Member outline the resident engagement and the consultation process that has been carried out in the regeneration process please?

Reply

I'd like to thank Councillor Butler for his supplementary; there's been extensive consultation conducted over a number of years by Clarion on all three estates

impacted by the regeneration; High Path, Ravensbury and Eastfields. It is also as well about to embark on further consultations in terms of High Path in relation to Phase two of development. I believe that alongside the ten pledges that Clarion Housing have made, that it has been extensive and it has involved extensive engagement with local residents. This regeneration will result in a transformation of all three estates. It's something I welcome but resident engagement is actually key to making regeneration successful, thank you.

From Councillor Hina Bokhari to the Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Engagement and Equalities

Does the Cabinet Member agree that the Cabinet should adopt the All Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslims working definition of Islamophobia in the UK ("Islamophobia is rooted in racism and is a type of racism that targets expressions of Muslimness or perceived Muslimness")? If so, how will the Cabinet Member ensure it is adopted and used in appropriate Council policies?

Reply

The All Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslims working definition of Islamophobia was released in November 2018. It has not yet been formally adopted by the Government and to date has only been adopted by one local authority in the UK. Given that Merton has a significant Muslim population and there are heightened risks around hate crime related to the UK's departure from the EU the Council welcomes the work of the All Parliamentary Group and is currently considering the merits of formally adopting the working definition.

It should be noted that the Council already has in place robust policies on discriminatory and racist behaviour and takes a zero tolerance stance against all forms of hate, including Islamophobia. Merton's Equality and Community Cohesion strategy outlines our commitment to prevent discrimination in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty set out in the Equality Act 2010 and provides protection against race and religious discrimination. Additionally Merton's Hate Crime strategy aims to develop a victim-oriented, multi-agency approach to tackling all forms of hate crime across the borough. The council will come together with partners including the Metropolitan Police and groups representing the local community to foster a strong approach to tackling hate crime and supporting its victims.

Supplementary

Thank you Madam Mayor, I appreciate the answer that's been given by the Cabinet Member. I hope Merton Council will become a champion against Islamophobia as has the Labour-run Councils Redbridge and Newham who have accepted the definition. According to hate monitoring group Tell Mama, Muslim women bear the brunt of that 40% rise in hate crime in Britain. As a Muslim woman myself who has been racially abused, we need discrimination addressed for women like myself. Can the Council commit to reporting back to the Full Council on your considerations either by the next Council meeting or the one after that?

Reply

I thank Councillor Bokhari for her original and also for her supplementary question. I share your concerns that you've just made. As you are aware this Council takes very

serious and robust action for any homophobia actions taken against residents in this Borough. We have definitely increased our hate crime strategy we have looked at the community cohesion strategy, we monitor it from time to time and I know that the definition has not been widespread by the Government. It has been done by one Borough in the whole of London but I do feel that we will do everything possible that we can as an authority to make sure that this action is embedded as we did in the hate crime strategy.

From Councillor Sally Kenny to Cabinet Member for Children's Services

I welcome the decision to offer care leavers in the borough a council tax exemption up to the age of 25. Can the Cabinet member outline the other ways the council supports care leavers into independence?

Reply

- The Local Authority provides a ring fenced number of social housing for care leavers – number 15
- We have staying put arrangements and are developing the supported lodgings so that young people can remain with carers longer to develop their skills
- Provide £2000 leaving care grant to support with setting up a permanent home
- We provide £500 bursary per term to support with university
- Workshops from an income maximisation officer, independence and emotional well being workshops
- Link in with the DWP to support care leavers with employment and benefits
- Offer a PA up to the age of 25 if required to support with matters that may arise and ETE
- Link in with local gyms to try and secure reduction in gym memberships
- Advocate support Jigsaw for you up to age of 24

Supplementary

Thank you Madam Mayor. Thank you to the Cabinet Member for her reply. It is known that care leavers are more likely to be not in education, employment or training. What is the Council doing to address this issue?

Reply

I'd like to thank Councillor Kenny for her question, well her questions. We have a dedicated MyFutures team here in Merton including a youth employability and employer engagement officer to work directly with these children. As an employer ourselves we work to provide apprenticeships, work experience, mock interviews and even work trials before applications open. So we do a lot of work ourselves and we also work with partners including Veolia and idVerde to make sure that job opportunities are also available to our young people and care leavers through them. Thank you.

From Councillor Ed Gretton to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport:

The Council offered £5,000 to every ward in January 2018 to spend on local neighbourhood improvements. Can the Council confirm the monies were properly allocated and spent?

Reply

Every ward councillor was offered the opportunity to say how their ward would best benefit from £5,000 worth of Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy. The potential expenditure of the £5k for each ward covered a wide range of different issues which included highway repairs, environmental spending, new benches, plants and money passed on to community groups to spend.

Based on this pilot, later in 2019 councillors will be asked to select projects within their wards up to a total value of £15,000. More information on the Ward Allocation Scheme was reported to Cabinet on 14 January 2019. The report and minutes from the meeting are available online

<https://democracy.merton.gov.uk/documents/s26249/2019-01-14%20Cabinet%20Report%20Neighbourhood%20CIL%20Ward%20Allocation%20v7.pdf>

For more information about Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy visit

<https://www.merton.gov.uk/planning-and-buildings/planning/community-infrastructure-levy/spending-the-levy#allocation>.

Supplementary

Thank you Madam Mayor. May I ask the Cabinet Member for Regeneration with regard to the £5,000 ward grants that were meant to go out to every ward across the Borough in advance of the local elections last May, will he apologise to the Residents Associations and the members of this Council and every resident in Merton for having failed to allocate any of that funding from the £5,000 ward grants and will he apologise for the misleading statements they gave in the run-up to the local election. Will he agree to meeting the ward councillors of every ward across Mitcham Morden and Wimbledon to make sure this time, the £15,000 which they're talking about is properly allocated and invested in our Borough?

Reply

I'd like to thank Councillor Gretton for his supplementary. I completely and utterly disagree with his comments that he has just made to Council. It was £5,000 that was introduced by a Labour administration, Council the other week has agreed to have £15,000 over three years that's something I think that we welcome in terms of expenditure. Clearly this was the first year this was introduced, there are lessons to be learnt in terms of that process which we have actually brought forward in terms of this year. I am willing to meet with any people who have got issues specifically with the CIL money with a view to resolution. But instead of knocking this Council we should be thanking this Council for actually empowering local residents and giving

them the ability to spend money in their own wards. Councillor Gretton might not welcome it, I certainly do. Thank you.

From Councillor Aidan Mundy to the Cabinet Member for Education

Can the Cabinet member update us on progress of the Wimbledon Harris Academy school?

Reply

Harris Wimbledon opened in a temporary site provided by the council at Whatley Avenue, SW20 in September 2018. The new school has proved popular with parents, being fully subscribed for its first entry and based on preferences for September 2019 it is fully expected to fill. Based on numbers in September 2018 and admissions preferences for September 2019, rolls at the existing state funded schools in Merton have either remained stable or grown in this period and so the new Harris Wimbledon is meeting the council's objective of providing additional basic need places, increasing choice, and not adversely impacting on existing schools.

Working closely with government colleagues in the ESFA (Education and Skills Funding Agency) the permanent school building at High Path is on schedule to be completed for September 2020 as planned. With planning permission in place, the handover of the High Path site (excluding the Elim land) has now passed to the ESFA to commence demolition works, with arrangements in place for Elim to make a temporary move in March to enable the contractor to keep to programme for the September 2020 completion.

Supplementary

Thank you Madam Mayor. I'd like to thank the Cabinet Member for her answer regarding the success of Wimbledon Harris Academy. Given the recent release of the unvalidated GCSE results, Primary School performance tables and pupil progress measures, could the Cabinet Member update us on Merton's relative position nationally in relation to pupil progress at Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 please?

Reply

I'd like to thank Councillor Mundy for his question. The results are unvalidated, but currently we have our Primary Schools being ranked 8th nationally on progress for reading, 23rd for writing and 6th in mathematics. For attainment we ranked 36th nationally. For the secondary schools we are ranked 8th nationally for progress and 27th for attainment but we wait for the full results to come and look forward to that. Thank you.

From Councillor Mark Kenny to Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health

Can the Cabinet Member outline what measures the council is taking to improve air quality around our schools?

Reply

In 2018 Merton published its new Air Quality Action Plan 2018 – 2023 (AQAP) the plan is split into 9 separate themes and contains some 70 action points, there is a specific schools theme titled 'Our Schools' (Action Point 65 – 70 below).

- Maintain our ongoing commitment to school travel plans and the STARS (Sustainable Travel: Active, Responsible, Safe), review.
- Carry out audits of schools in the most polluted areas of the borough and help provide a scheme of mitigation where necessary and possible. The new programme of school audits will start in April 2019; we will aim to cover at least three schools a year.
- Review and assess annually the necessity for audits at schools and nurseries in areas subject to high levels of pollution.
- Incorporate schools in areas of poor air quality into our monitoring network and regime.
- Joint working arrangements with Public Health partners around schools to deliver joint health benefits.
- Work with and provide specialist advice and support to schools around air quality issues.

Additional actions to the Air Quality Action Plan include:

- We will deliver a number of Anti-Idling campaign events at schools and anti-idling signage is currently being introduced at 20 locations throughout the borough – which includes schools.
- Running additional enforcement of parking outside schools to help reduce pollution and provide a safer environment around schools.
- We are currently working with colleagues in Parking Services to pilot and implement School Streets' initiative, this is where the road outside a school is closed to traffic at school opening and closing times to reduce pollution and increase safety.
- Along with our Public Health colleagues we will be leading in a school's project called the 'School Neighbourhood Approach Pilot - (SNAP)', formerly 'School Superzones'. Colleagues from 3 different directorates; Children, Schools and Families, Environment & Regeneration, and Public Health are collaborating to shape a local 'whole systems' approach to improve the environment in and around a school across four broad themes: The food around us; Moving around; Feeling safe; Spaces and places (includes air quality); and Communications and enablers

Supplementary

Thank you Madam Mayor. I thank the Cabinet Member for the response and I would like to also ask could you please outline what other initiatives are being run to improve childhood health and wellbeing? Thank you.

Reply

I thank him for his question and for his supplementary question. Childhood obesity was one of the Health and Wellbeing Board's priorities two years ago and that's followed through in our work on diabetes this year. We'll be publishing the diabetes framework which was launched from the diabetes truth programme in the spring and that will coincide with the launch of the Merton Mile where school children will be encouraged to do a mile of activity around Figges Marsh. We're also supporting Fizz-Free February where we're encouraging people to give up fizzy drinks for the month of February and that ties into the Local Authority declaration we signed in December on sugar which seeks to combat sugar across everyone but particularly young people.

From Councillor David Williams to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Cleanliness:

What additional resources have Public Space and Member Enquiries teams had to engage since 1st October 2018 to cope with the extra volume of complaints/enquiries as a result of the decision to introduce new waste collection and recycling services by Veolia – and at what cost? Additionally how many formal complaints (using the Complaints procedure) have been logged in the same period in respect of these service changes compared with the same period (1st October – 31st January) the previous year?

Reply

In advance of the service change in Oct 2018 we anticipate the need to provide greater resilience in our services and recruited additional resource. This knowledge came from a detailed "lessons learnt" exercise with colleagues from other Boroughs and undertook visits to colleagues in Sutton call centre to ascertain expected workloads and waiting times.

To fund this temporary resource we have set aside £250k to fund this from the underspend in the waste services revenue budget.

Public Space Neighbourhood Client Team – 2 additional officer

Public Space Customer Service officer – 2 additional officers

Communications Support – 1 additional officer

Call Centre - 6 additional call centre staff (this was staggered and reduced over the first 3 months)

Complaints – 2 additional officers.

With reference to the number of complaints received, as expected with any large service change of this scale the service has been required to respond to an increase in the number of waste related complaints. Between Oct 2018 and Jan 2019 we received 729 complaints compared to 347 in the corresponding period the previous year.

Supplementary

Well Madam Mayor I think I'd like to thank the Cabinet Member for his answer but it doesn't really address the question which in particular related to Member Enquiries and why I raised the question in the first place. So my supplementary is does the Cabinet Member realise how impotent Councillors seem if whilst there is an alleged turnaround time of 10 working days from members enquiries it has taken eight days to even log the member enquiry and secondly it's still taking twenty or more days to get a proper reply from Public Spaces. What's he going to do about it?

Reply

I'd like to thank Councillor Williams for his first question and I'm sorry that he feels my answer didn't fully answer that. In terms of speeding up the response times, you have already seen that there is an increase of resource going into that area and we anticipate improving that turnaround time. But I also would point him at the initiative that I've introduced which is to have ward councillor workshops across collection days. The Friday collection day which will include West Barnes, Lower Morden, Cannon Hill and the other one that has a Friday collection for refuse that's slipped my mind at the moment, we'll be having that in two weeks' time and that is an opportunity for particular areas and Councillors to express their concerns we have a meeting with Officers with Veolia and all together on that. So I would encourage him to take part in that when we get through to the Monday collections and the Tuesdays, but Wednesday and Thursday collection meetings have already happened. So we are taking steps to improve response times and to make sure that members concerns are addressed.

From Councillor Anthony Fairclough to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Cleanliness

What impact has the recently introduced charge for the bulky waste service had on fly tipping?

Reply

The chargeable bulky waste service was implemented from the 7th January this year, as such it is too early to analyse the data and identify trends in the take up of this service. With regard to impact on fly tipping, there is little if any correlation between charging for bulky waste and fly tipping. When we introduced the free charge we saw no impact at all and other waste authorities across London report the same position. We do not expect any further increase in fly tipping with this change

Supplementary

Thank you Madam Mayor I'd like to thank the Cabinet Member for the answer to his question although I am slightly surprised that he notes that when bulky waste free collection was introduced there was no impact at all on instances of fly tipping and wonder for how many years after the implementation of that scheme the Cabinet continued to approve Council publicity saying that the rationale for bulky waste collection was in fact the reduction of fly tipping and in fact why that was if it wasn't the case. Thank you Madam Mayor.

Reply

Thank you Councillor Fairclough for your question and supplementary. I wasn't around at the time when it was being introduced as free charge and it used to be charged when I was the Chair of Environment before, so I can't answer the specifics of how long the publicity was used but certainly I would re-emphasise the fact that Councils across the country have found that it has no impact on the level of fly tipping whether a charge is introduced or whether it's abolished. So I stand by that but I can't answer the other part but I can get that to him outside of the meeting.

From Councillor Joan Henry to Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health

Can the Cabinet Member explain what steps the council is taking to ensure that improving air quality is a priority across the council?

Reply

In 2018 Merton published its new Air Quality Action Plan 2018 – 2023 (AQAP). The plan is split into 9 separate themes and contains some 70 action points. The AQAP was prepared by the Environmental Health Department of Merton Council but with the support and detailed input from Services from across the Council.

This AQAP is subject to an annual review, appraisal of progress and reporting to the relevant Council Committee. Progress is also reviewed by Senior Management and Cabinet Member monthly. It is also the subject of a report at this Council meeting. That report summarises much of the positive work being undertaken including areas where the Council is at the forefront of the air quality agenda and also outlines the next steps and forthcoming actions and progress

Supplementary

Thank you Madam Mayor. I'd like to thank the Cabinet Member for his reply. Is there work to integrate air quality into local health plan and the Health and Wellbeing Strategy?

Reply

I thank Councillor Henry for her question and her supplementary. There's a very close working relationship between Environment and Regeneration and Public Health and indeed between myself and Councillor Whelton as the two Cabinet leads and within the Local Plan air quality will form a standalone part of it to make sure that it is embedded throughout. But equally the Director of Environment and Regeneration is a very active member on the Health and Wellbeing Board which is currently refreshing its' Health and Wellbeing Strategy and part of that strategy is looking at place and air quality will form an integral part of that, so it's very much embedded in both the Local Plan and the refreshed Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

From Councillor David Simpson to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Cleanliness:

Can the Cabinet Member give an update to members on the % improvement in air quality in Merton attributed to the Diesel Levy since its introduction in April 2017?

Reply

The Council has been monitoring air quality in the borough for a number of years including using real-time automated monitoring equipment. Every year it publishes an Annual Status Report covering measured air quality within the borough. Pollutant levels are noted to show an overall reduction in Merton over the last seven years.

It is important to understand that air quality across London will only improve over time due to a raft of measures which will impact positively on emissions from road traffic. This will include the move towards less polluting vehicles and Merton, along with many boroughs, will benefit, for example, from the steps it is taking to encourage electric vehicles. The Council's Diesel Levy, along with similar schemes in other boroughs, will assist in achievement of air quality guidance levels in a quicker timeframe.

Supplementary

Thank you Madam Mayor and I thank the Cabinet Member for his eleven line answer to a very simple question, which was asking for a percentage, which of course he didn't find or give me. So on the basis that he doesn't understand that particular question, perhaps he could understand the fact that pollutants generally derive from moving vehicles and not parked vehicles. So as he can't answer the question on the diesel tax, has it really made any difference in improving air quality in Merton? Will the Cabinet Member actually be honest and admit that this is really just a stealth tax on parked vehicles and would he apologise again to those innocent residents who bought diesels thanks to encouragement from a Labour government.

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health

As the response states, we are in the process of undertaking that review that was committed to within two years and I believe the terms of reference for that review will be taken to the next scrutiny meeting and part of that will be looking at what we are actually measuring because most other Boroughs which have implemented diesel levies they have measured the reduction in diesel vehicles being registered through CPZs rather than any actual reduction in air quality and I have to say I find the Conservative's opposition to the diesel levy baffling considering that 57% of the pollutant which is created within the Borough is attributable to road transport and of that a significant proportion is attributable to diesel; it's all in here if you want to read it, you know rather than focussing on leadership elections, perhaps you should focus on the substance.

From Councillor Peter Southgate to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Cleanliness

Allegations have appeared in social media that Veolia has been instructing crews collecting materials for recycling in Brighton to send them for incineration instead.

<https://insidecroydon.com/2019/01/10/binmageddon-veolia-is-sending-recycling-to-incinerator/>

Have any materials collected by Veolia for recycling in Merton been sent for incineration? What safeguards does the council have to ensure household recycling when correctly presented for collection in Merton is in fact recycled?

Reply

I can confirm that no material collected for recycling is sent for incineration. Veolia undertake the collection of our domestic waste following which it is sent for further processing through our disposal contract with Viridor. Under both these contracts all material collected as recycling is required to be segregated from the general waste stream and processed in the most environmentally friendly manner

Supplementary

Thank you Madam Mayor and I thank the Cabinet Member for this response and in particular for the assurance that, let me quote 'no material collected for recycling is sent for incineration'. In view of the importance of this to public confidence in our waste collection and the importance indeed that they should recycle, can he use all the skills of our comms department to get that message out there? In particular I wonder if he can address the widespread belief that it is more profitable for Veolia to send materials for incineration than for recycling?

Reply

I thank Councillor Southgate for his question and supplementary. Recycling is something that's been close to my heart for many many years and I was the Councillor that introduced paper and card recycling across the Borough back in the nineties, so I certainly take it seriously and I make sure that it's happening. I think the best way to reassure the public when we have the audited figures coming through is to start publicising the figures of what is going to the different waste streams in terms of paper and card, mixed dry recycling, food waste, garden waste and the rest for landfill stroke energy exchange rather than incineration I would correct him slightly. So I think that is the best way of doing it but we constantly look at the communications we put out to promote that and I would reassure residents whenever I speak to them, that what is put out for recycling is taken for recycling.

From Councillor Russell Makin to Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport

What moves is the council making to improve the use of public transport in the borough as a direct way of improving air quality?

Reply

Road transport is believed to contribute about 50-60% of emissions to the total pollution burden in Merton. Of this around 25-30% is due to private vehicles. Therefore, the more members of the public that use public transport the better for air pollutant levels. The move from the private vehicle will also be assisted by improving infrastructure on cycling and walking. The Council is in the process of finalising its draft third Local Implementation Plan (LIP), which sets the course as to how we will meet the Mayor's Transport Strategy and incorporates a number of delivery targets, including targets on car ownership and air quality. The LIP funding of £1.5m for 2019/20 will include a focus on healthier streets and the Healthy Streets/Healthy

People initiative sets out to rebalance our streets and environment thereby improving the street environment and promoting healthier lifestyles through more walking and cycling.

Merton Council has achieved increases in public transport accessibility across the borough. This contributes to greater choice in sustainable transport modes. Further details are presented in the response to Question 54.

Supplementary

Thank you Madam Mayor. Would the Cabinet Member update the Council on the recent Tramlink consultation and outline the benefits to residents of Merton?

Reply

I'd like to thank Councillor Makin for his supplementary. The Tramlink extension would have considerable benefits because we do want to improve public transport in this Borough and we do want to have less usage of cars and more usage of public transport. One of the routes goes through his ward Cricket Green and it would actually help in terms of accessibility, likewise there's another route to South Wimbledon and another option was the Wimbledon to Sutton route. Tramlink has been an enormous success in the twenty years that it has been running, it has improved considerably access from Mitcham to Croydon and Wimbledon and it's something that I welcome. Clearly we want to see transport improve further so we are working very closely with TfL in terms of the options that are available on the Tramlink extension and I would like to mention as well that we've had over three thousand people responding to the TfL consultation and people engaging across the Borough. So there's many many positives that do exist but yes we do want to see Public Transport improve further and we welcome the Mayor having undertaken this consultation. Thank you.

From Councillor Nick McLean to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Cleanliness:

The recently published Public Health & Air Quality report states that where public transport is less accessible, then there is a corresponding increased reliance on private car use. Therefore, can the Cabinet Member explain why there has not been a greater focus on improving the public transport infrastructure in the East of the Borough?

Reply

Over the last two decades there has been a sustained and concerted focus on improving public transport and sustainable transport choices in the east of the borough as part of the Council's cross party commitment to bridging the gap.

- **2000** saw the opening of **London Tramlink** which refurbished Mitcham and Mitcham Junction stations as well as proving two new stations at Belgrave Walk and Phipps Bridge. The new stations opened up access to Phipps Bridge and also made access to jobs easier for our residents there.
- **2008** saw the long awaited opening of **Mitcham Eastfields Station**. The first new station in suburban London since the 1940s. Mitcham Eastfields provides 8 trains per hour with journey times of 19 minute to London Victoria. Services

also connect Mitcham directly to Blackfriars, St Pancras, Luton Airport, Wimbledon, Sutton and Epsom.

- **2018** saw the completion of **Rediscover Mitcham** which not only created a step-change in the quality of the public realm, but sought to improve bus journey times, frequency and reliability by un-tangling the bus routes from general traffic. The impact of the bus-only street in London Rd is that bus services are now more reliable, faster and interchange between services is easier.
- **2018** Rediscover Mitcham has also provided segregated cycle lanes through the town to create a more efficient and pleasant environment for cyclists. The council and TFL have also invested in **Croydon Road and Beddington Lane** segregated cycle lanes to improve the cross-borough cycle network and connect public transport nodes.
- **2018 Sutton Link.** We have worked in partnership with TFL and LB Sutton to move forward options for the Sutton tram or bur rapid-transit which would increase connectivity in the south-eastern wards.

Transport investment in Merton is clearly demonstrable when comparing the 2012 TFL PTAL Map with the current and forecast one.

PTAL (Public Transport Accessibility Levels) in Merton have increased at Mitcham Eastfields [then 2 now 4], Wimbledon Chase [then 2 now 3] and St Helier [then 2 now 3] due to the Thameslink upgrades and Mitcham Town Centre, bus lane [then 4 now 5] other increases in PTAL occur in Figges Marsh, Streatham Rd, Tooting Station and Colliers Wood.

<https://tfl.gov.uk/info-for/urban-planning-and-construction/planning-with-webcat/webcat>

Supplementary

Thank you Madam Mayor and I thank the Cabinet Member for the response. If the increase in Public Transport has been as successful as the Cabinet Member claims, then why is the Healthy Living gap continuing to increase?

Reply

I'd like to thank Councillor McLean for his supplementary. In terms of the living gap which he mentions this is not just down to public transport it is down to a whole range of other indicators in terms of education, health, poverty and to say that, you'll see in the answer that we want to bridge the gap, that's a key focus of us as a Local Authority and actually one of our top priorities because we do recognise that life expectancy is seven years higher in our most affluent wards compared to our most deprived wards. So that's why we would actually welcome the Tramlink extension we think that will be actually something that will be of a bonus as well and actually improving public transport. We have seen considerable improvements and hopefully we will see even further improvements in the years to come now that we do have a Labour Mayor running London, thank you.

From Councillor Carl Quilliam to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Cleanliness

Will the Cabinet Member agree to publish the air quality monitoring data for the site around the Beddington Energy Recovery Facility on Merton Council's website? And if so, by when?

Reply

This was also subject of Public Question 37. The Energy Reclamation Facility is closely regulated by the Environment Agency (EA) and stack emissions are continuously monitored and reported to the EA in 'real-time'. In theory the stack emissions should not negatively impact the borough. The Environmental Impact Assessment identified pollution from associated traffic as the potential risk from the facility.

Sutton Council has two continuous air quality monitoring stations near the facility which provide data to the London Air Quality Network, a public site openly accessible. (www.londonair.org.uk)

Officers from Merton have identified this facility as a new potential source of pollution in the borough and declared this in our Annual Status Report, so that it will then need to be considered by officers as part of the annual air quality review process.

Officers are also working with colleagues in Sutton Council through the South London Air Quality Cluster Group to discuss and review these cross-border concerns.

It is simply too early to tell but officers are confident in the control measures associated with the facility.

Locations of monitors.

- ST5) Beddington Lane North at Junction of Brookmead Road & Beddington Lane, Sutton. Species Monitored: Nitrogen Dioxide and PM10, PM2.5 Particulates (more details [here](#))
- (ST8) Beddington Lane at Prologis Park, 140-142 Beddington Lane.

Supplementary

Thank you Madam Mayor and thank you to the Cabinet Member for the response. If Air Quality monitoring data around the site of the Harris Academy on High Path does not improve to safe levels by the time the School is due to open, will the Council delay opening the School? The mean raw NO2 readings for the past year was 41, above the safe level of 40, peaking at 49.74 in January 2018. Thank you.

Reply

I'm confused by the question that's been asked there by Councillor Quilliam because the question is to me but the supplementary does not relate to my brief at all. So I think that we need to arrange for a written answer to him on his question.

From Councillor Ed Gretton to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Cleanliness:

When exactly will the Council publish the full year 2018 Air Quality Annual Status Report for our Borough?

Reply

The Council is required to submit its Annual Status Report for approval to our governing body for air quality – the Greater London Authority. The Council's then publishes the report each year after the GLA has had the opportunity to comment and all data from automated equipment has been ratified. This process usually takes a few months into each calendar year but the Council will, again, publish the Report as early as it can and once other responders have fed back to Council officers.

Supplementary

Thank you Madam Mayor it's on air quality. Will the Cabinet Member kindly commit going forward to publishing clearer data on air quality so residents can immediately see what the NO2 level is on their road without having to spend 15 minutes doing complicated cross referencing across multiple documents and will he also make sure with his Cabinet colleagues that all Planning decisions where air quality is a factor going forward in our Borough reference the proper local street for the NO2 levels and the PM particulate matter data and it is not three years out of date so it's the current data as well in all future planning decisions.

Reply

I'd like to thank the Councillor for his question and again say that I think there's some confusion on your side because this question is not part of my brief and we can organise an answer unless one of my colleagues would like to answer it now. We'll organise an answer for you.

From Councillor Thomas Barlow to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Cleanliness:

Can the Cabinet Member outline the physical method of refuse and recycling waste collection used by their contractor Veolia?

Reply

Our waste collection contractor has introduced a harmonised waste collection service across the Partnership boroughs. In October 2018 we introduced a new wheelie bin collection service.

I am pleased to advise that Households continue to receive weekly collections, with two collections (food and recycling) one week and three collections (food, recycling and general waste) on alternate weeks.

Each household has been provided with one wheelie bin for non-recyclable household waste along with a wheelie bin for paper and card; they continue to use their existing recycling box for plastics, glass and cans.

The new service has maintained the curtilage collection approach rather than introduce a kerbside collection system. This is to ensure that our pavements are kept clear of refuse containers restricting access for pushchair / wheelchair users. This requires householders to set out waste bins within the confines of their property as close to the edge as possible. As part of our monitoring process and to ensure high collection standards are maintained, the waste crews will be required to return containers back to the curtilage of properties.

Supplementary

Residents in my ward are confused as they are across the Borough; they've had new bins forced upon them at substantial cost and effort on the basis that they are wheelie bins. Yet they look outside their windows on collection day and see that they are not wheeled anywhere with bags taken out of bins during collection just as they were before. Could the Cabinet Member explain this?

Reply

I can assure the Councillor that I, thank him for his question and his supplementary. It's one of the areas that I've been talking to Veolia's management regularly about because some of the teams are it seems still sticking to the practices more or less they've had for the last twenty years and so we are aware of that we are working on it we certainly didn't invest in wheelie bins to be just refuse storage in peoples' front gardens. It is to be operated and used. I've been operating my own pilot at the moment, there's a pair of trainers in the bottom of my wheelie bin and they've been there since Christmas, but I'm reporting that regularly to say that the bins not been tipped. So I am on the case and I'm following that up because bags lifted out of bins will split and therefore it negates completely the purpose of having a wheelie bin.

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