

Merton Council

Council

3 April 2019

Supplementary agenda 2

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| 5 | Public questions to cabinet members
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| 6 | Councillors' ordinary priority questions to cabinet members
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| 7a | Strategic theme: Councillors' questions to cabinet members
The questions and written responses will be circulated at the meeting. | 19 - 26 |

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1. From: Tony Burton

To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport

To ask for details of all bids made to the Neighbourhood Fund under the 2018 ward pilot project, including naming the councillor making each bid, their ward, the value of bid(s), whether bid(s) were successful and whether all monies for the pilot were allocated or what amount was left unallocated.

Reply

This is a large body of work and the answer will not fit into the space for councillor questions. However we commit to publishing this within the next month. The pilot has led to the Ward Allocation Scheme; from 01 April 2019 each ward in Merton has £15,000 per ward to be delivered on small scale public realm projects over the next three years led by Merton's ward councillors:

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

2. From: Sandra Vogel

To the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance

Your web site says you spend £3820 to distribute 85,000 copies of My Merton. My home has not received the last two issues. How do you check delivery is made to all homes, how many homes miss out like mine, and how is it possible that non delivery happens?

Reply

A delivery report is sent to Merton Council following completion of each distribution of My Merton. This contains information about any properties missed and the reasons why. The reasons for non-delivery are mainly due to access issues, for example the entry phone not answering in blocks of flats, blocked letterboxes or empty properties. Any complaints of non-delivery received by the council are sent to the distribution contractor, an investigation takes place and the outcomes are reported back to the council. On average each edition of My Merton is successfully delivered to 92% of homes in the borough. Any household not receiving their copy of My Merton should contact communications@merton.gov.uk or telephone 020 8545 3827.

3. From: Tom Killick

To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport

What does the Council estimate would be the cost of introducing 20mph speed limits on all residential roads in the borough in one go rather than piecemeal as is currently planned?

Reply

The Council is introducing the borough wide 20mph speed limit in phases as this is normal practice when dealing with such a vast area. This is due to a number of factors and constraints but primarily due to the work involved – site assessment, statutory consultation, ordering and storing of all the required signs, consultation with external bodies such as TfL and neighbouring boroughs that will impact some areas but not all; contractor's availability and ability to erect all the necessary signs; officer's time etc.

Rolling it out in phases also allows the Council to deal with objections specific for the area. For example, objections from one area that would not relate to other areas but it would cause unnecessary delay to implementation.

The roll out started in November 2018 and it is envisaged that it would be completed by October 2019 subject to not receiving any objections from any given area.

4. From: Stephanie Upton-Prowse To the Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Cleanliness

I'd like to know what you're doing in the borough to promote No littering. We have an epidemic locally and the council needs to make it clear that it's not acceptable to litter. Are you going to put in more bins? What are your ideas to make Wimbledon Litter Free?

Reply

We currently have Enforcement officers covering all town centres and known hot spot areas. These enforcement officers patrol and issue Fixed Penalty Notices to those that drop litter. We carry out engagement around the same areas raising awareness of the consequences of dropping litter. As part of this engagement we offer stubbi pouches which are small portable disposal ashtrays as quite a lot of our litter issues around the town centres are cigarette related. The ashtrays also double up as chewing gum pouches we advertise the no butt litter fixed penalty information on the back of the ashtray.. In addition our staff visit schools on a regular basis giving no littering messages to children.

We offer equipment for local residents to assist in our combat to keep the streets clean by involving themselves in a community clean up. For more information on community clean ups residents can contact Principal Engagement Officer John Ball on 020-545-3173 or at john.ball@merton.gov.uk

Litter Bins are normally placed if there is enough evidence that a bin is required, the bins are carefully placed in order not to encourage miss use of the bin and where the bin can be easily emptied. Unfortunately Bins often attract fly tipping and the quantity and location of bins is carefully considered so as to strike the right balance.

**5. From: Joyce Pountain
To the Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Cleanliness**

With reference to the answer to question 6 in Feb 2019 Questions to Council, please outline the exceptional circumstances in which herbicides are used in parks and green spaces and what was the outcome of the investigation into Hammersmith & Fulham's use of steam foam?

Reply

Our contractor is using lawfully permitted weedkillers including glyphosate, Chikara, Crossbar and Greenor in the parks to control weeds where it is cost prohibitive to use other, manual methods.

We are aware that Idverde are using 'steamfoam' on some of their other contracts but at a higher contract fee. There is an additional cost for this method as it is more labour intensive and it can only reach areas accessible by a van & long hose.

**6. From: Nicola Thompson
To the Cabinet Member for Community and Culture**

Does the council have an official response and reporting procedure to follow when it is alerted to an environmental incident? If so, could you please outline what it is? If there is no such procedure, please explain why?

Reply

The Council is a Category 1 responder in relation to emergency planning under the UK's civil contingencies procedures. This would be appropriate for the Council's approach to any significant incident requiring a multi-agency response.

In relation to less significant environmental incident, the Council's Environmental Health service would respond for any incident relative to its regulatory powers. The Council may create its own processes for dealing with specific types of incident but all processes would require to meet that set out in any statute used or guidance thereunder. Some pollution incidents, e.g. waste operations, complex flood risk activities and complex water discharges and groundwater activities, like large sewage treatment plants, are regulated by the Environment Agency.

**7. From: Phil Ling
To the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance**

How many schools in Merton took up the council's offer of solar panels for their roofs and on average how much were these schools projected to save in electricity bills?

Reply

28 schools have received free solar panels from the installation scheme at a cost to the Council of £1.93 million since 2011, resulting in income of £110,000 per annum through the FIT.

2 Schools were unable to receive panels due to technical issues.

The average saving across the 28 schools is £3,374 per annum. However panel system sizes range from 10 kWp (roughly the size of 3 domestic installations) to 150 kWp (roughly the size of 50 domestic systems). For example, one secondary school has 3 large systems whereas another primary school only has panels on one small roof. The difference in sizing is due to the nature of the sites and the availability of suitable roofs.

As such the range of savings provided by the panels goes from £761 up to £11,139 per annum.

Furthermore, the business case for solar panels allowed for the creation of a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) allowing the council to charge (at below national grid rate) for the generated electricity used by schools on site. This means that each site has two annual savings figures to allow for a PPA to be used. The above figures are provided without PPA. Once a PPA is put in place the saving to the school will be reduced, with the council using the income to re-pay the initial investment and ensure the panels continue optimal production for their full lifespan.

Please be aware that there are several caveats to the saving figures provided;

- 1) Savings are based on a figure of 60% on-site usage for the majority of systems. Changes to this usage figure have been applied for large systems and for very small systems to provide a more realistic saving calculation
- 2) Savings are calculated using a nominal electricity rate of 12p per kWh, which is based on current corporate utility contract prices inclusive of non-commodity costs. As such annual saving figures may go up or down depending on the cost of the imported power that PV generation is offsetting.

8. From: Luke Taylor To the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health

What process does the council have to monitor air quality at school sites across the borough and how does this fit in to the council's air quality improvement plan?

Reply

The Councils Air Quality Action Plan 2018 has a section dedicated to action around our schools. A copy of this can be found on the Council's web-site. The Council has committed to auditing air quality at schools in the most polluted areas and providing a

scheme of mitigation at each including introducing schools into the monitoring regime where these are in areas of poor air quality.

During audits, pollutant levels inside playgrounds and in school buildings have always been within the UK guidance levels. The main challenge in protecting children from poorer air quality relates to the way in which they travel to and from school and Merton's Air Quality Action Plan includes a commitment to school travel plans.

**9. From: Tamara Kohler
To the Cabinet Member for Education**

What measures does the council have in place to assist schools with careers advice and building relationships with businesses for things like inspirational visits to schools, work experience and apprenticeships?

Reply

All Merton secondary schools are using the recognised Gatsby criteria to assess practice with regards to careers advice, information and guidance (information about the criteria can be found here <https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/schools-colleges/understand-gatsby-benchmarks>). A representative from the London Enterprise Adviser Network has presented to heads of sixth form meeting. This organisation will support all schools, including how they can be linked to a business adviser who will support a range of activities in schools.

**10. From: Samantha MacArthur
To the Cabinet Member for Education**

How many schools in Merton set deficit budgets in 2018-19 and how many are likely to set deficit budgets in 2019-20. How many of these are primary vs secondary?

Reply

In 2018/19 fourteen schools set deficit budgets. Schools are required to submit their final budgets to Merton by the first of June as year-end balances are included as part of budget setting. We will therefore not be able to confirm the number of schools in deficit for 2019/20 until then, but we would expect the number to be similar to 2018/19.

**11. From: Emily Robertson
To the Cabinet Member for Children's Services**

How many requests for statutory assessment have been made in Merton in the past five years and what percentage of these requests have resulted in Merton issuing an EHCP?

Reply

- Number of referrals 2015 – 2019 (present day): 1200
- Number of EHCPs issues 2015 – 2019 (present day): 967
- Percentage: 81%

12. From: Pippa Maslin

To the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health

On 6th February I asked the council to 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. The answer received was encouraging but non-committal. Has there been any progress?

Reply

From innovations such as the Merton Rule in 2003 to maximising solar panel coverage across most of Merton Council's primary schools, four secondary schools, leisure centres and other council buildings, Merton Council has long been a leader in taking action to reduce carbon and tackle climate change. We are very supportive of the principle of what declaring a climate emergency seeks to achieve, and have been closely following what other Councils which have declared an emergency have done. However, it is our view that to succeed in limiting global warming, declaring a climate emergency must be backed up by a comprehensive strategy and deliverable action plan that will demonstrate how carbon reductions will be achieved, otherwise it remains simply a declaration without any real action. We are presently considering our next Climate Change Strategy, which will be discussed by Cabinet in the coming months. This will include some detail on the proposed next steps to continue to reduce carbon in the borough backed up by actions we can take to deliver on our promise. As part of this work we will consider whether we can commit to becoming carbon neutral by 2030, and will use that Cabinet paper to declare a climate emergency if we believe this is feasible. We would welcome the involvement of the community at this stage in establishing a working group to help deliver the strategy.

13. From: Shipra Gupta

To the Cabinet Member for Education

How many schools in Merton will be receiving less funding in the 2019-20 financial year due to funding formula changes? How many of these are primary vs secondary?

Reply

Merton's funding formula was set in such a way that no school would receive less funding per pupil in 2019/20 than what was received in 2018/19. This is a "per pupil"

safeguard and would mean that if the number of pupils in a school reduced, the overall funding could reduce.

**14. From: Kevin Clarke
To the Cabinet Member for Education**

Ricards Lodge and Rutlish recently implemented a shared sibling policy in recognition of their close links. Given the schools are not on a shared site does the education dept. have other plans to reduce the effects of sexual discrimination in admission policies?

Reply

Ricards Lodge and Rutlish are separate single sex schools with admissions policies primarily based on siblings and then distance from the school. Due to their locations some 1.5 miles apart, it is accurate that girls to the north of Wimbledon will get a better chance of getting a place at the Ricards Lodge, and boys to the south of Wimbledon will get a better chance of getting into Rutlish. While there may be more choice of school depending on your residency and sex of child, this is not sexual discrimination. The council did review the position with the schools relatively recently and due to the close working between the schools e.g. a shared sixth form it was agreed, as stated by Mr Clarke, to have a shared siblings policy so that families can be together in the schools. However, it was agreed that the schools did not wish to stop prioritising places for their traditional catchment e.g. Rutlish providing places for Morden boys. There are therefore no further plans.

The current school admissions round for 2019 entry shows that, with the addition of the new Harris Academy Wimbledon School and current preference patterns, all families in Wimbledon have an accessible Good or Outstanding school.

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

What are the Mean and median processing times for EHCP applications in each of last 5 years?

Reply

Mean:

- 2015 – 25 Weeks
- 2016 – 27 Weeks
- 2017 – 24 Weeks
- 2018 – 20 Weeks
- 2019 - 0 EHCP's referred in 2019 finalised to date

Median

- 2015 – 22
 - 2016 – 25
 - 2017 – 23
 - 2018 – 19
- 2019 - 0 EHCP's referred in 2019 finalised to date

16. From: Barry Smith To the Cabinet Member for Education

Why has the number of Children Missing Education in Merton increased for the third year running?

Reply

Children are legally counted as children missing education (CME) when they are off roll of a school. The number of children missing education off roll has been at the same level for the last 3 years (128, 129, 125) against an overall increasing school population (3% rise across the 3 years) In summary: The overall number of CME has not increased despite the rise in the number of pupils.

The number of children identified as vulnerable to missing school has increased over the last 3 years (123, 131, 175) however these children are still on roll which shows improved targeting and identification of children to support them to prevent them becoming CME off roll.

17. From: Emma Maddison To the Cabinet Members for Regeneration Housing and Transport

How does the council monitor and evaluate the quality and value for money of work carried out to schools that is managed and procured by the council? What feedback does the council ask schools for in relation to this work and what's the average timeframe for resolving issues that arise?

Reply

The council manages building works with technical staff either in the Corporate Facilities Management team or, for major projects, outside design consultants. To ensure best value, works are procured according to the council's standing orders that ensures the market is properly tested for value for money and for major projects a design team regularly monitors the projects with a professional Quantity Surveyor to monitor value for money. Prior to the procurement of a major project a strategic review is undertaken to agree the most appropriate procurement approach for the market at that time.

For major projects school are regularly involved throughout the design and construction phases of a project so feedback is an iterative process. We do not

record the average timeframe for resolving an issue, and it will vary according to the complexity of the issue and the contractor involved.

**18. From: John Braithwaite
To the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance**

What have the revenue implications been for the council of putting solar panels on school roofs? Has the council made money from this, if so then how much?

Reply

28 schools have received free solar panels from the installation scheme at a cost to the Council of £1.93 million since 2011, resulting in income of £110,000 per annum through the FIT.

2 Schools were unable to receive panels due to technical issues.

The average saving across the 28 schools is £3,374 per annum. However panel system sizes range from 10 kWp (roughly the size of 3 domestic installations) to 150 kWp (roughly the size of 50 domestic systems). For example, one secondary school has 3 large systems whereas another primary school only has panels on one small roof. The difference in sizing is due to the nature of the sites and the availability of suitable roofs.

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Furthermore, the business case for solar panels allowed for the creation of a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) allowing the council to charge (at below national grid rate) for the generated electricity used by schools on site. This means that each site has two annual savings figures to allow for a PPA to be used. The above figures are provided without PPA. Once a PPA is put in place the saving to the school will be reduced, with the council using the income to re-pay the initial investment and ensure the panels continue optimal production for their full lifespan.

Please be aware that there are several caveats to the saving figures provided;

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- 2) Savings are calculated using a nominal electricity rate of 12p per kWh, which is based on current corporate utility contract prices inclusive of non-commodity costs. As such annual saving figures may go up or down depending on the cost of the imported power that PV generation is offsetting.

**19. From: Hugo Forshaw
To the Cabinet Member for Education**

What does the council do to monitor and encourage the provision of age appropriate LGBT+ inclusive sex and relationships education in schools across the borough? Have any schools experienced resistance to such classes, and if so how is the council engaging with local communities on this issue?

Reply

As a Stonewall Education Champion, Merton Local Authority encourages schools to use age appropriate resources to provide Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) sessions which are inclusive of same sex relationships. A small 'Equalities' group of senior leaders in Primary and Secondary schools meet to discuss issues including inclusive RSE curriculum resources. Student groups at Ricards have provided sessions for local primary school pupils through this network. The equalities adviser provides CPD for primary and secondary schools, showcasing appropriate resources and strategies. School Leaders have received advice on working with parents on these issues from various speakers including Andrew Moffatt, (No Outsiders), Stonewall and Equaliteach. Schools who have experienced resistance to their inclusive approach to RSE have sought advice from colleagues and experts in the field.

**20. From: Jack Rawden
To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration Housing and Transport**

With the traffic on Gap road worse than ever, and the prospect of 600 new flats and a predicted increase of traffic to the area. Isn't it time to start considering parking restrictions on Gap road to ease traffic and make the lives of its residents bearable?

Reply

We only introduce a CPZ in roads where there is majority support from the residents. When the CPZ was introduced in the area in 2003, Gap Rd residents opted against the CPZ and therefore it was not introduced and other than a few compliant since then, there has not been any demand for intervention other than yellow lines to prevent obstructive parking.

The Council will consider consulting on a CPZ upon receiving a petition from Gap Rd residents demonstrating their support for a CPZ. However, if the residents do not want a CPZ but feel that there is a need for more yellow line restrictions, the Council would be happy to investigate and take the appropriate action.

**21. From: Vincent Bolt
To the Cabinet Member for Children's Services**

What are the number and % of EHCP applications conceded by council on appeal for each of last 5 years?

Reply

In the time available to me, I was able to review data from the last 2 years, however further time is required to analyse information held elsewhere. We have not had any EHC needs assessment applications (I.e. No to assess) lodged with the First Tier Tribunal and therefore the council has not conceded requests for an assessment as part of a registered appeal. I will follow up with detail when records further back have been gone through.

**22. From: Chris Stanton
To the Cabinet Member for Community and Culture**

Will the Council be reinstalling bins in Wandle Park following their 'trial' removal? If reinstallation is on the cards, when will this happen and how many bins will there be?

Reply

Yes, there will be some bins reinstalled in specific places, where it has been deemed most suitable, given the litter in those locations. These bins should be reinstated within the next few weeks.

**23. From: Jil Hall
To the Cabinet Member for Children's Services**

How many EHCP applications have been made in each of the previous 5 years?

Reply

- 2015 – 180
- 2016 – 214
- 2017 – 316
- 2018 – 387
- 2019 (to date) – 103

**24. From: Viv Vella
To the Cabinet Member for Education**

What support do schools get from the council to manage projects partly or wholly funded by the council and how much of school leaderships teams' time is spent managing such projects?

Reply

I am presuming this question refers to building projects. Building projects funded by the council are generally managed by the council rather than the school. School leaderships teams will still be involved as projects need to meet the needs of the school, but the technical elements are undertaken by the council and/or appointed technical design consultants. No record is kept of the specific time spent by the school leadership teams.

From Cllr Agatha Akyigyina to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Cleanliness

Could the Cabinet Member please give up the latest update on recycling targets and actual figures since the introduction of the new waste collection service?

Reply

Over the first 5 month of the new service we have seen a significant reduction (-11%) in the overall volume of general waste being collected. This equates to a monthly reduction of 400 tonnes to landfill. The main contributor to this success is the increase in food waste participation which has seen an increase of 64% or 176 tonnes per month and continues to increase.

The Garden waste service remains popular with our residents and our customer base continues to grow. We currently have 9,100 customers compared to 7,500 last year. Over the last 5 months, following the introduction of the new service, we have collected an average of an additional 59 tonnes per month (36%) compared to the same period last year.

The net impact of these changes has resulted in a current recycling rate of 40% . Taking into account the full year impact of the service change we are confident that next year we will achieve our stretch target of 45% recycling performance and position us in the top quartile of all London boroughs.

From Councillor David Dean to the Cabinet Member for Community and Culture

At the last full council, Cllr Draper stated that street trees were a problem because of their high cost of purchase and maintenance. At the Raynes Park Community Forum on 26th March, Cllr Brunt said that he just found out that the leaves fall off trees, and a “balanced debate” is required to see if street trees are welcome.

Bearing in mind the Labour so-called “action plan” said more trees should be planted, will Labour confirm if the cabinet want more or less street trees to improve air quality?

Reply

Unfortunately, most of the wording in the question is inaccurate reporting or untrue. Nevertheless, trees improve the liveability of towns and cities and reduce costs in a number of ways including reducing storm water runoff, improving air quality, storing carbon, providing shade, and reducing urban heat-island effects. They also enhance bio-diversity by providing food, habitat and landscape connectivity for urban fauna. Merton has a very high number of trees across the borough, not just on streets but in parks, recreation grounds, and public and privately owned property.

Despite identifying potential problems such as leaf litter, tree debris and possible infrastructure damage, residents’ attitudes to street trees remain positive. The aesthetic and practical attributes of street trees such as beautification, shade

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provision, increased property values, added privacy and noise reduction are rated highly by most city residents.

Traffic emissions and other fine particulate air pollution can cause serious health effects, including premature mortality, pulmonary inflammation, and altered cardiac functions. However, trees can be particularly effective at capturing airborne pollutants in urban areas if they are located in appropriate positions. These do not need to be on the street, and some of the pollutants removed by trees include ozone, nitrogen oxides, sulphur oxides, sulphur dioxides, carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide (CO₂). It has been estimated that large healthy trees can remove between 60 and 70 times more air pollution than smaller trees. Street trees are an effective tool in reducing air pollution and creating healthier urban environments, if they are located suitably.

For the reasons outlined above the administration supports the planting of trees in the borough, both on and off street, and will consider the appropriateness of locations, the benefits that they will bring and balance against the costs of implementation and maintenance.

From Cllr Sally Kenny to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport

Where is the Council up to with its roll out of 20mph zones and what is the plan up to the end of 2020?

Reply

Merton is committed to road safety and we have a number of initiatives that promotes road safety. One initiative is the introduction of a borough wide 20mph speed limit. To improve the general road safety environment and in line with the Mayor of London's transport priorities which has been adopted within the Borough's Local Implementation Plan, we are now introducing a borough wide 20mph speed limit.

The objective is to change 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.

The Council has started its programme for rolling out a borough wide 20mph speed limit and we have provisionally secured funding through our Local Implementation Plan for next financial year which will be utilised to continue the roll out of the borough wide 20mph speed limit. Given the limited available funding this financial year, the Council has started from the borough boundaries where neighbouring boroughs have already introduced a lower speed limit.

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We have started the roll-out in the East of the borough where a number of streets linking to Lambeth and Croydon were 20mph as part of the neighbouring borough roll-outs. In 2018, we extended 20mph limits from Wandsworth into Wimbledon village. The borough-wide roll-out will be implemented from East to West, subject to formal consultation and sign off. We plan to complete the borough-wide 20mph project over the next 12 months by Spring 2020.

In terms of benefits, it is considered that with a change in behaviour, there will be less aggressive driver behaviour; less likelihood of accidents; improved perception of safety; safer highway environment / experience for all vulnerable road users. Studies show that compared to 30mph, not only are the number of accidents reduced in 20mph roads, but also their severity. For instance, a pedestrian sustaining a fatal injury from a collision decreases from approximately 55% at an impact speed of 30mph to 17% at an impact speed on 20mph. There are also health benefits, as lower speeds help improve physical and mental health. As roads become safer so people are more inclined to walk and cycle more, providing regular exercise and enabling healthier lifestyles. Air and noise pollution are also reduced at 20mph and these measures support sustainable transport options and encourage modal shift.

From Councillor Thomas Barlow to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport

What was the total cost of the tickets, flights, hotels, and travel expenses to send the Leader of the Council, the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport and two officers to the MIPIM conference in Cannes?

Reply

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MIPIM (Marché International des Professionnels de L'immobilier) is the world's largest international trade show for the development and property investment industry. Attendance provides Local Authorities an opportunity to meet the most influential players from all sectors of the international property industry and enables delegate's access to the greatest number of development projects and sources of capital worldwide. Given the challenges facing our borough as a result of the impact of Brexit and the need for significant additional housing, it was felt important to attend in order to promote the borough at this prestigious event.

The event is recognised as the leading real estate exhibition and networking platform to forge deals, build relationships and networks to attract inward investment. Officers also attended seminars at the event including topics such as over-station redevelopment, the future of high streets, London developer's briefings as well as a series of 1:1 meetings with private sector developers, housing associations, investors, pension funds and professional counterparts from other London authorities. As Merton will soon be seeking an investment partner to deliver Morden Regeneration, it is right that Merton has a presence on this stage and actively promotes the borough.

Merton Council attended MIPIM as part of the London stand delegation, which also included representatives from numerous other London councils, including neighbours from LB Wandsworth, including the Leader of the Council there. The event costs were managed on behalf of the Council by 3FoxInternational. This offered a discounted rate on the conference tickets of £1360 each. The council's costs were offset through commercial sponsorship obtained by 3FoxInternational. £6000 worth of sponsorship was achieved.

Cost Breakdown:

MIPIM event ticket (£1360 each) x 4	£5440.00
Flights (£294.54 each) x 4	£1178.35
Accommodation in Nice (£101.41 per person per night) x 4 rooms	£1217.00
Travel Expenses	
Train (am): Nice > Cannes (£7.20 pp x 4 people) x 3 journeys	
£86.40	
Taxi (pm): Cannes > Nice (£90 for 4 people x 3 journeys)	£270.00
Total Cost (before sponsorship)	
£8191.75	
(£2047.93 per person)	

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Sponsorship achieved

£6000.00

Total cost to LBM after sponsorship

£2191.75

(£547.93 per person)

From Cllr Simon McGrath to the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance

How many council employees have a parking permit issued by LB Merton?

Reply

As at week commencing 18th March 2019 = 882

From Councillor Najeeb Latif to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport:

It has taken the council 16 months to bulldoze the former Virgin Active Battle Close gym; at the July council meeting this council voted to 'continually review options for short term use'. Why did the Cabinet Member fail so badly to be business-like and find a temporary operator, how many discussions did he have, and how many bids did he receive to take on the site on, and what was the total cost in terms of security and loss of business rates to Merton taxpayers?

Reply from the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance

The options for short term use were limited by the need to find a use that would both minimise disturbance to local residents and be viable for a short timescale so that the council's long term ambition for residential development was not frustrated. Negotiations have been delegated to officers. Only one offer was received but this was not sustainable unless the council could confirm a minimum period for this use of three years. This the council could not do as it would frustrate our long term ambition for the site and reduce the site's value to local taxpayers. The total cost of security since the council purchased the lease to Virgin is £257,818.67, and the Business Rates £241,110 for which there was a 100% retention scheme, the council retaining 64% and the GLA 36%. Both liabilities will end following demolition which is underway currently. It is not yet possible to say with accuracy what the net benefit to

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Merton taxpayers will be, as the site has yet to achieve planning permission, but it is likely to far outweigh those liabilities.

From Cllr Rebecca Lanning to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport

Can the Cabinet member please update on plans for the regeneration of Morden Town Centre?

Reply

The Council continues to work with Transport for London and the GLA in securing funding to enable us to bring the regeneration of Morden town centre forward for delivery. We hope to be announcing the launch of a procurement process for a third party development partner this year.

07a: Member Questions ST

From Cllr Stan Anderson to the Cabinet Member for Education

Further to the last Council meeting, can the Cabinet Member please give an update on the new Harris Wimbledon?

Reply

The council has now successfully completed the complex exercise of ensuring the entire site for the permanent school is vacant and it has been passed to the Department for Education (DfE) on a 125 year lease to build the school. Demolition work is progressing well, and the DfE's contractor is on course for August 2020 completion.

Harris Wimbledon opened in a temporary site provided by the council at Whatley Avenue, SW20 (former Adult Education building) in September 2018 and has proved popular with parents, being fully subscribed in its first year and for September 2019.

Since rolls at the other state funded schools have either remained stable or grown in this period the new Harris Academy Wimbledon School is currently meeting the council's objective of providing additional basic need places, increasing choice, and not adversely impacting on existing schools.

From Councillor Oonagh Moulton to the Cabinet Member for Education

Could the Cabinet Member for Education confirm the current proportion of schools rated **Ofsted** Good or Outstanding in our Borough?

Reply

Currently 91% of Merton schools are judged to be good or better by Ofsted. This includes all Merton secondary and special schools. Whilst 30% of all Merton schools are outstanding (above the national average of 21%, and just below the London average of 32%), 63% of secondary schools are outstanding which very much higher than the national average for this educational phase.

From Cllr Dave Ward to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport

Can the Cabinet Member please explain the safer school zones and what the plan is to introduce them?

Reply

Through implementing the Mayor's Transport Strategy over recent years, the Council has been implementing prioritised road safety measures as part of a rolling programme of investment outside schools. Schemes thus far have included localised 20mph speed limits, traffic calming features / informal crossing provisions such as

speed tables; school keep clear zig zag markings; school flashing beacons; road safety training; drop off zones; drive and stride etc.

As part of Council's objectives to reduce congestion, pollution, risk of collisions, promote sustainable and active transport and provide a safe environment within the vicinity of schools, the Council has given an undertaking to introduce part time road closures that will prevent non-resident traffic during the school morning and afternoon traffic peaks.

It is the council's intention to purchase the camera equipment and IT software needed to administer and enforce the zones over the coming months. The planned go live date is September 2019 to coincide with the new school year.

From Councillor David Simpson to the Cabinet Member for Education:

What are the Cabinet Member's stated priorities for Early Years education in our Borough?

Reply

The priorities for EY education in the borough are:

To support EY education providers to achieve good or above in Ofsted inspections

To commission quality, flexible and sufficient places so that families have choice as to where, and in what patterns they take up their free early education entitlements across the mixed market of providers.

To support EY practitioners CPD through the new Firm Foundations and schools training programme, focusing on Peer led improvement, SEND and how young children learn

To work in partnership with the range of partners and families so that children's SEN support needs are identified, assessed and supported as soon possible so that EYFS outcomes for SEN support are in line with London average.

To further improve the proportion of children achieving the Good Level of Development so that Merton's performance is stronger in relation to Outer London and statistical neighbours and to narrow the gap at the end of the EYFS, securing good outcomes for all young children so they are ready for statutory education

To work with strong local providers (including the English hub) to support schools to improve early language development.

To support the sector in responding to the proposed new Ofsted Inspection framework from September 2019

To roll out the Healthy Early Years Programme, improving practice and outcomes within EY education

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To increase the take up of funded early education places for vulnerable 2 year olds

To work collaboratively across the wider multi agency network and Children's Centres so families and their children have access to learning environments from birth, preparing them for formal early education

From Cllr Hina Bokhari to the Cabinet Member for Education

It is pleasing to see that there have been no permanent exclusions from primary or special schools in Merton in 2017-18. How many permanent exclusions were there in secondary schools and how many managed moves have taken place in primary, secondary and special schools in the last two years?

Reply

In 2017/ 18 Permanent Exclusion In secondary schools in Merton fell significantly to 8.

Managed moves are not used in special schools. If a placement can no longer meet a child's needs in a special school an interim review is undertaken and the child may then move school.

Between September 2017 and June 2018 there were 13 Secondary school managed moves.

Between September 2017 and June 2018 there were 4 Primary school managed moves.

From Cllr Marsie Skeete to the Cabinet Member for Children's Services

In what ways does the Council work with schools to tackle issues in children's mental health?

Reply

The Mental Health of our children is vitally important. Schools have been supported in a number of ways to develop a range of approaches to support good mental health and where there are issues to help the child. We have worked with schools over a long period to develop effective support for children. Many schools Commission a Targeted Mental Health in Schools (TAMHS) service with skilled therapists working in schools. A group of schools in Mitcham have been working with Place to Be to develop provision and a whole school approach. The Behaviour Service also runs training for school to develop their own interventions - for example in 2018 we have been rolling out work on Theraplay and Attachment-Friendly schools.

The CAMHs improvement board commissioned Wishmore Academy to run training for schools on understanding mental health and develop individual school based

plans. In 2018 the majority of schools participated in 2 days of workshops run by the Anna Freud centre where schools and mental health workers worked together on ensuring the systems to support children are in place. The Camhs partnership runs regular Mental Health Networking events – these are themed i.e. Girls and Autism, ADHD etc. and are open to any agency including schools.

A group of schools are piloting a whole school approach to Mental Health supported by the Clinical Commissioning Group and the Council. We were successful in securing the Government's Trail Blazer bid for Mental Health in schools. This will include piloting a team of mental health workers supporting children and parents, as well as a whole school approach.

From Councillor Janice Howard to the Cabinet Member for Education:

What are the Cabinet Member's stated priorities for **Primary School** education in our Borough?

Reply

The priorities for primary school education are as follows:

- a) To continue to ensure all schools are judged to be at least good when inspected by Ofsted, through the effective use of the Merton School Improvement Strategy, including Support and Challenge groups.
- b) To ensure all schools currently judged to be outstanding achieve outstanding outcomes in their next Ofsted inspections (in light of the raised standards of the Ofsted Framework for Inspection). To continue to support schools to use maths mastery strategies to develop practice and building on existing strengths, including through liaison with the South West London maths hub.
- c) To continue to improve writing so that attainment at the expected standard is more in line with Outer London and statistical neighbour averages, including through liaison with the South West London English hub.
- d) To further improve outcome in reading by ensuring that schools' approaches are finely planned to meet the needs of all pupils and provide pupils with meaningful experiences to develop reading for pleasure, including through a focus on the development of whole class guided reading.
- e) To ensure that outcomes for Pupil Premium eligible pupils continue to improve, through the provision of targeted support for schools, and central training.
- f) To continue to improve provision and outcomes of pupils in receipt of SEN support through work with school leaders (including SENCOs and subject leaders) and teachers, so that they are correctly identified (avoiding over identification of some groups of pupils), their needs are met, and outcomes improve in relation to

Outer London and statistical neighbours. To develop an assessment approach for this group of pupils.

g) To support schools to develop their wider curriculum and their offer for pupils' personal development in light of Ofsted changes so that there is a clear idea of progression in all subjects; manageable assessment; a clear rationale for their curriculum meeting the needs of their pupils; and a strong offer of broader experiences (for example through educational visits).

From Cllr Russell Makin to the Cabinet Member for Education

What recognition has Merton Council recently had from the Department for Education regarding its schools?

Reply

Four congratulatory letters have recently been sent to Merton Primary Schools by the Secretary of State for Education, recognising the very high levels of progress their pupils made in reading, writing and mathematics in the 2018 Key Stage 2 assessments. These performances place these schools (Wimbledon Park, Harris Primary, St Mark's Primary and Joseph Hood Primary) amongst the top 3% of primary schools in the country.

From Councillor Andrew Howard to the Cabinet Member for Education:

What are the Cabinet Member's stated priorities for Post-16 provision in our Borough?

Reply

The priorities for post 16 provision are as follows:

- a) To ensure all Merton secondary schools remain good or outstanding
- b) To improve outcomes for the most able pupils post 16 so that the proportions achieving the higher A level outcomes improve, and the gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers narrow at this key stage.

From Cllr Paul Kohler to the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance

A number of other councils have set up voluntary council tax donation schemes. Will the Cabinet member look into establishing such a scheme here in Merton, for the use of particular projects such as an Education Innovation Fund, to help educational groups develop new services in the borough?

Reply

We have begun to explore the possibility of introducing a voluntary scheme in Merton by investigating the approach of other councils. The Council can, if it wishes, establish such a scheme, but it would need to be purely voluntary and must be administered outside our Council Tax System via separate payments. Payments could be enhanced via Gift Aid if channelled through a Charitable Trust.

In Westminster, for example, their scheme, has targeted residents predominantly living in Band H properties. Westminster initially embarked on a consultation with the Councils Band H residents seeking support and also views on where the money should be spent, but not on ongoing expenditure. The Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea have also just announced that they will be launching consultation for a similar scheme.

It should be noted, however, that Westminster has 15,600 Band H properties and that, due to the unfairness and regressive nature of the council tax system, their council tax is only around £800.00 (excluding the GLA precept).

In contrast, Merton has just 1,740 band H properties who pay £2,338 council tax.

Westminster received payments from 540 residents (3.4%) and on average they contributed £1101.

Using Westminster's average payment the total payment to the council of those who made payments (including council tax) is less than £2000. For information, if Merton received 3.4% payments that would be just 59 donors. In addition, this may be an optimistic estimate as Merton's Band H residents already pay more than the total average payment of Westminster donors (donation plus council tax).

To deliver the scheme, Westminster created a trust, undertook consultation exercise and set up a small team to develop and implement. They also determined the priorities for the monies, in line with resident views gained from the consultation, so the impact of the scheme could be assessed. It is not clear at this stage what the cost of this exercise was, but it is clear that it was a significant exercise.

We are therefore sceptical about whether the business case for such a fund would prove to be good value for money in Merton. We also would not want a fund to pay for important or strategic services that should be paid for as a matter of course out of council budgets. As a result, Council may wish instead to draw residents' attention to

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alternative existing ways of donating to good causes in the borough, for instance through the Mayor's charitable efforts or our amazing local voluntary sector.

From Cllr Brenda Fraser to the Cabinet Member for Education

What are the current figures for children in pupil referral units in the borough?

Reply

As at end March 2019, 136 children are currently supported in alternative provision, of which:

- 38 Smart Centre
- 18 Alternative Education placements
- 19 Medical on site groups
- 19 Medicals off site tuition
- 29 Smart Choice – newly arrived year 11s
- 8 Progress Academy – transition group to schools
- <5 Induction
- <5 Dual Reg

The reasons for use of alternative provision are:

- 69 Behaviour
- 38 Medical
- 29 Year 11 new arrivals

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