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Merton Council

Council

10 July 2019

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1. From: Shipra Gupta

To the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance

What steps is Merton council taking to reduce the gender pay gap amongst its employees and how long does the council expect these measures to take to achieve gender pay equality?

Reply

The gender pay gap at Merton depends mainly on which services are provided in-house, shared with other Local Authorities or by external contractors rather than any intrinsic pay inequality. For example, prior to the transfer out of predominantly male and relatively lower-paid staff in Waste and Street Scene services, there was a gender pay gap in favour of women.

The Council uses job evaluation to ensure jobs are equally and fairly graded, and all managers involved in recruitment and selection are required to attend training. Where possible interview panels are required to be diverse. We regularly review our terms and conditions to ensure there are not equal pay biases in the design and operation of our pay and rewards structures.

2. From: Tamara Kohler

To the Cabinet Member for Schools and Adult Education

What has the 1 in 75 to 1 in 40 rule change meant for funding at Merton schools?

Reply

It appears that the questioner may be referring to a local authority decision in Gloucestershire about SEN Top Up funding for schools. This would be entirely a local decision and a matter for Gloucestershire only. It doesn't have any impact on funding at Merton schools.

3. From: Tom Killick

To the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Health and the Environment

Further to the answer to question 12 on 12 September 2018, what is the Council's position on Heathrow expansion in light of the current consultation?

Reply

I can confirm that officers from Merton are active participants throughout every consultation phase, and will continue to do so.

Our main cause of concern relates to the future possibility of noise from aircraft, and the potential impact on residents and quiet spaces, such as our parks.

Although so far the consultation doesn't provide the necessary clarity for officers to provide a detailed response, the consultation process will be developing over a period of time and that more detailed information will emerge as the process matures.

We will strongly urge residents and businesses to play an active role in the consultation process and make their voices heard.

As information becomes clearer Merton will adjust its stance to ensure that local residents and the borough is protected as far as possible.

**4. From: Samantha MacArthur
To the Cabinet Member for Commerce, Leisure and Culture**

Who is expected to be most adversely impacted by the introduction of tennis court charges?

Reply

For clarity, charges for tennis court use are not being introduced as this activity has been "pay to play" continuously for many years in Merton.

The technology based booking system being adopted at four venues soon will simply ensure that existing fees and charges are more efficiently and effectively applied.

There is currently a standard hourly rate of £8 per court per hour for adults, £6.20 for concessions that applies to all users at all of our courts with the exception of Wimbledon Park where the fees are greater: £12 for adults at peak times; £9.20 for adults at off-peak times; and £8.20 for concessions at off-peak times.

Merton Council continues to support enterprises such as "Tennis for Free" at two locations (Tamworth Rec, Mitcham and Joseph Hood Rec, Morden) as it has done for many years.

**5. From: Jil Hall
To the Cabinet Member for Schools and Adult Education**

How many children with an EHCP in Merton do not currently have a school place?

Reply

There are currently 16 children with an EHCP who are currently off roll (Children missing education). All of the cases are tracked at the Children Missing Education Panel.

**6. From: Hugo Forshaw
To the Cabinet Member for Schools and Adult Education**

How many Merton schools do not receive the minimum funding guarantee and where does Merton rank against national indices of deprivation?

Reply

Funding for all schools, academies and free schools is calculated through Merton's Schools Funding Formula. For the 2019/20 financial year £29,681 was allocated through the minimum funding guarantee to 4 of the 53 institutions.

7. From: Tony Burton To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport

To ask for details of how the historic significance of the late 18th century Bishopsford Road bridge and its heritage features will be assessed and retained in the restoration work following its unfortunate collapse?

Reply

The Council understands the heritage value of Bishopsford Bridge as well as recognising its location within the Wandle Valley Conservation Area.

The collapse was an unprecedented and unfortunate event. The Council's priority over the past few weeks has been to address the immediate emergency situation with regard to utilities, flooding and supporting vulnerable members of our community.

Regarding the bridge structure itself. Our priority is to stabilise the bridge to create a safe environment for our engineers to assess the structural condition of what remains of the bridge. This work will take up until the end of July.

Parallel to the structural assessment, there is an independent investigation underway to look into the cause and impact of the collapse.

Only after this assessment is complete, will we be able to understand the options open to us for repairing or replacing the bridge.

8. From: Pippa Maslin To the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Health and the Environment

Part of the justification for outsourcing waste management to Veolia was that it will improve recycling rates, yet there is no discernible hyperlink to any concrete evidence when one visits the council's website. How about a clear hyperlink to a regularly updated dashboard on the home page?

Reply

Following the introduction of the new containerised collection service in October 2018, I am pleased to advise that we are continuing to experience an increase in our recycling performance.

The net impact of these changes has resulted in a current recycling rate of 44% compared to a historic average of approximately 36%. Taking into account the full year impact of the service change we are confident that this year we will achieve our stretch

target of 45% recycling performance and position us in the top quartile of all London boroughs.

The annual recycling rates for all UK councils can be found on the [Let's Recycle website](#) and on the [GOV.UK website](#). The Council has not historically published this information on its own website, however, as it was a stated priority of the rationale for the new service I agree it is something that Council should be making more easily accessible for residents to view.

I am working closely with officers and our colleagues in the South London Waste Partnership to provide links to monthly dashboards and performance reports on all areas of contractual performance to better inform residents, and we will ensure that recycling performance forms part of this.

**9. From: Sandra Vogel
To the Cabinet Member for Voluntary Sector, Partnerships and Community Safety**

What provision is being made to support the relocation or retention of voluntary and community organisations based at Worsfold House in plans for disposal and/or redevelopment of the site?

Reply

In May 2013 The Council let Wandle Valley Resource Centre, (previously known as Worsfold House) Church Road, Mitcham to Grenfell Housing under a Tenancy of Will to be used for B1 Offices and D1 non-residential institutions such as school or training centre purposes. At that time the site was vacant and was listed in Merton's Local Plan Sites and Policies Development Plan Document (Adopted July 2014) as Site Proposal 17. Grenfell Housing merged with Evolve Housing 1st April 2017 and they continued to occupy the site as a temporary pop-up resource centre.

Evolve formally notified the Council that they would be ending their tenancy of the site on 30 November 2019 and provided a list of their 12 tenants. Evolve confirmed on 19 June 2019 that they would write to their tenants of the building, giving them notice on their facilities sharing agreements, to end on the same date. Under the agreement with the Council they were required to give one month's notice, but have provided six months for their tenants to find suitable accommodation. Some of the tenants have already made contact with the Economic Development Officer in future Merton seeking advice regarding other suitable space to relocate. The Council have been advised today (2nd July) that tenants have been formally given notice and so the officers will contact all of the tenants in writing offering support in seeking alternative accommodation but the Council property opportunities are limited as most of these are currently occupied.

**10. From: John Braithwaite
To the Cabinet Member for Commerce, Leisure and Culture**

What is/was the average usage, by season, of each of the tennis courts where charges are being introduced this year (Joseph Hood, Dundonald Rec, John Innes) prior to the introduction of these charges?

Reply

We have no data on the usage of these locations in recent years as these sites are no longer staffed on a routine basis.

By introducing new court-side technology, as currently proposed, we fully expect to have full, accurate and thorough data in the future and by remote means.

Only the charging mechanism is changing as a result of current proposals, changing to one that is more efficient and reliable. Each of these courts is already a “pay to play” facility, even if collecting fees has not always been applied consistently on these sites.

**11. From: Philip Ling
To the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Health and the Environment**

What is the current status of the redevelopment of the Wilson Health Centre and when is the new centre expected to open?

Reply

The redevelopment of the Wilson Hospital is an NHS project, led by the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), on NHS Property Land. The Council has been working closely with the CCG as the aspiration is to create a holistic health and wellbeing campus. However, the Council has no direct control over the timescales or delivery of the redevelopment.

The typical NHS financing route for a scheme such as the Wilson is via a LIFT Company programme. In the summer of 2018, there was a national change affecting how a rise in interest rates (until the point of construction) would be managed between the NHS and LIFT companies. This created delays across the country, and whilst this remains a national issue the CCG is actively exploring alternative methods of funding and remains committed to the delivery the scheme.

Over the past 12 months, work has continued on the technical aspects of service design, and local engagement has been undertaken through the Wilson Community Reference Group. More recently, the CCG announced the establishment of a Steering Group to oversee the redevelopment, which will include local residents and community representatives.

A comprehensive update was provided to the Health and Wellbeing Board in March 2019. That can be viewed here:

<https://democracy.merton.gov.uk/documents/s27218/Report%20Wilson%20Update.pdf>

In that paper, the CCG confirmed the intention to open the Wilson by the end of 2022.

**12. From: Richard Hackforth-Jones
To the Cabinet Member for Schools and Adult Education**

What percentage of children were offered a space at a school listed on their application form, even if the full 6 spaces on the form were not filled in, for primary and secondary school in each of the last five years?

Reply

The following percentage of Merton resident applicants received a preference school offer on national offer day (whether they used all their 6 preferences possible or not)

Primary school reception year:

2019 – 94.83%

2018 – 95.18%

2017 – 94.10%

2016 – 93.67%

2015 – 94.23%

Secondary school year 7

2019 – 92.84%

2018 – 91.01%

2017 – 94.61%

2016 – 95.42%

2015 – 94.30%

Please note that all applicants received a reasonable offer of a school place, although for a small number this was after offer day

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

What is the procedure and process for the selection and appointment of panel members to the Design Review Panel; and who appoints them, how long for, on what terms, and what evidence of experience is required?

Reply

When Merton's Design Review Panel (DRP) was first started in 2007, the procedure was to have a long list and short list of panel members, the short list consisted of members who would attend DRP meetings. After a period of a few years, they would be 'rotated off' the shortlist onto the long list, which was essentially a list of 'members in waiting'. At this time new members would be rotated onto the short list from the long list.

This procedure worked for a few years until all those still available on the long list had served time on the short list. Following this a different procedure has been used. There are about 20 members on the panel, who attend from 1 to 3 meetings a year. As vacancies have arisen, the panel membership has been refreshed by appointing new members and rotating some members off the panel. This has been done a number of times during the life of the panel.

The way this is done is to advertise predominantly through relevant professional bodies such as Urban Design London and the Urban Design Group. Individuals also become aware of the panel and can independently express a desire to join the panel. When a refresh takes place, these are also taken into account.

The panel is set up and run by Merton Council and reviews proposals only within the council's Local Planning Authority boundary. The panel is run and managed by the future Merton team in the council and it is this team that appoints panel members. New panel members sign a code of conduct and declaration of interest form. There is no set period for serving on the panel. The process has not yet seen all original members replaced by newer members, though this process is ongoing.

To serve on the panel, members must have relevant experience in professions relating to the built environment, and must demonstrate, by means of a CV, e-mail and telephone conversation, that they are suitable candidates. This will include amount of expertise, a proven track record and ability to work as part of a panel. Skill gaps on the panel are also taken into account. The majority of members are from the private sector and the purpose of design review panels is to bring together individual professionals to provide a collective critique of development proposals, independent from (but not instead of) the council's own design, conservation and planning officers.

**14. From: Viv Vella
To the Cabinet Members for Adult Social Care, Health and the Environment
and Women and Equalities**

What is the council doing to promote mental health support services to BAME communities that currently have a low uptake of these services?

Reply

The majority of mental health services are commissioned and provided by the NHS. We work closely with our partners in health to try to ensure that services are accessible to all parts of our community.

The Council's social care duties in relation to adult mental health are fulfilled by South West London & St Georges Mental Health NHS Trust through integrated health and care teams. These arrangements are currently being renewed and access issues will be part of the new performance monitoring arrangements. As at June 2019, 35% of adult mental health social care service users were recorded as being from BAME communities.

Within the integrated mental health services provided by the Trust, the BAME proportion of patients is 42% for adult secondary care, 29.9% for CAMHS and 26% for older people services. These are broadly in line with the make-up of our community.

One of the challenges is to ensure that BAME communities have access to the full range of mental health services, including preventative and early intervention services and are not only seeking help at the point of crisis. For example, people from BAME communities are over-represented in those detained under the Mental Health Act but under-represented in accessing psychological therapies. This is a national trend. In Merton BAME communities make up 19.8% of patients in primary mental health services.

For this reason, the recommissioned Primary Care Mental Health Services service, Merton Uplift (which includes access to psychological therapies), has a focus on access by BAME service users, including incentive targets for BAME access. The new provider, South West London & St Georges Mental Health NHS Trust, is linking with local BAME and faith groups to improve access. It is too early to judge whether they are making progress against this target.

Merton Uplift allows for self-referral and supports self-help, peer support, a wellbeing strategy, triage and face-to-face therapy. The Council is also supporting and promoting London-wide initiatives that support good mental health, such as Good Thinking self-help tools. The Council has also been working with the voluntary sector to improve the adult mental health offer. This includes supporting Imagine Independence to move to a self-referral model for peer support. These approaches help reduce barriers to access and sit alongside the targeted work of the Trust.

**15. From: Daniel Weir
To the Cabinet Member for Commerce, Leisure and Culture**

How much money was secured by Merton from Crest Nicolson on the handover of Rowan Park and please can the Longthornton residents have confirmation that this money is ringfenced to be spent on the park only and brought up to standard agreed in planning?

Reply

Under the S.106 agreement secured with the planning permission for the development £95,000 was secured towards the ongoing management and grounds maintenance of the Public Park and £20,000 for the future repair and maintenance of the Local Play Area and is ring-fenced for Rowan Park only. In addition, approximately £35,000 was secured as part of the transfer of the park to the Council and is ring-fenced for park improvements.

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

The question of step-free access at Haydons Road Station has been asked repeatedly. The council claims it "continues to lobby Network Rail for station improvements". When did officers last raise the accessibility issue for this site with Network Rail? How hard are you actually trying to make this station accessible?

Reply

Accessibility improvements to both stations and bus stops are raised regularly with Network Rail and with the GLA. On improving accessibility to Haydon's Road station, most recently the council raised detailed issues with Network Rail in September – October 2018 relating to additional gates and ramp access as part of enforcing a nearby development site. There is an opportunity now for residents to influence how funding is spent on improvements to Haydon's Road station specifically. Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) are currently asking passengers and stakeholders across the GTR network to submit and rank their ideas to influence how the £15 million Passenger Benefit Fund is spent. All the Thameslink stations on the Wimbledon Loop in Merton have been allocated funding, including £80,000 for Haydon's Road Station. There is also potential to pool funding pots from several stations to deliver larger schemes. Details and survey link can be found on the GTR website at www.passengerbenefitfund.co.uk/the-fund. The consultation closes at the end of July. This consultation provides the ideal opportunity for the local community to press GTR to bring forward proposals for a step free access to the westbound platform. Selected proposals have to be delivered by Sept 2021 and we would strongly encourage all residents interested in improvements to Haydon's Road station to respond to this consultation.

17. From: Mark Gale
To the Cabinet Members for Leisure, Commerce and Culture and Women and Equalities

Has the discriminating policy that this council and GLL (Greenwich Leisure Ltd) ironically trading as "Better", enforced upon Morden Leisure Centre without any accurate recording of local residents refusal data broken any Equality Act legislation and/or public sector Equality Duty?

Reply

The Council and GLL (Greenwich Leisure Ltd) operate the leisure facilities in Merton in accordance with the Equality Act Legislation and Public Sector Equality Duty.

18. From: Gail Morrison
To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration Housing and Transport

Research shows people are reluctant to buy electric vehicles if there's a scarcity of charging posts. The only way to overcome this is by offering mass lamp-post charging, as in Wandsworth. Does the Council plan to install charging points via the streetlamp system and when this will be implemented?

Reply

The council is working with Source London and Transport for London to deliver a mix of fast(7kw) and rapid (22kw and 50kw) publically accessible electric vehicle charging points across the borough. To date 105 EVCP have been installed or are in the process of being installed with another 37 charge points expected to be delivered by the end of 2019. The council remains interested in testing lamp column chargers (3kw), but with the rapid development of battery and alternative kerbside based charging solutions they may not necessarily represent the best approach.

06: Non ST Questions

From Councillor Natasha Irons to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport

Following the recent collapse of the Bishopsford Road Bridge, would the cabinet member please update council on what work has been undertaken with residents and businesses in the area?

Reply

Since the partial collapse of the bridge, Merton Council has worked closely with its partners, FM Conway Ltd and the Environment Agency to monitor any bridge movement and stabilise the structure.

These stabilisation works will finish on Monday 8 July, subject to weather conditions, and work will then commence on a full structural inspection followed by an assessment to determine the extent of repair work needed. Following the emergency phase of this problem when the Council sought to support those most affected through our emergency planning arrangements the Council has now moved into a process of working towards business as normal.

Senior officers from the council have worked closely with affected residents and most recently attended a public meeting on 3rd July 2019 to consider bus diversion proposals with Transport for London. Officers are arranging signage (“open as usual”) for nearby businesses and encouraging businesses in the area that pay business rates to apply to the council for business rates relief. We are working to establish a single point of contact via email and website for any enquiries relating to Bishopsford Road Bridge.

From Councillor Oonagh Moulton to the Cabinet Member for Commerce, Leisure and Culture:

What is the Cabinet Member doing to ensure that litter from picnics and BBQs is removed quickly and efficiently from our parks and open spaces, and can she assure residents that there will not be a repeat of the public health hazards of last summer?

Reply

The Greenspaces team discussed this matter with our grounds contractor, idverde, in preparation for the start of this summer season, with Wimbledon Park specifically in mind as picnics and barbeque waste issues are much greater there and not such a significant issue at other open space venues.

A working practice has been put in place which involves a litter picking team attending the park from 7.30am daily in advance of the park’s formal opening (8am on weekdays; and 9am on weekends). There is, furthermore, a dedicated litter picker who attends the park for 4 hours at the end of the day during the core summer period and at weekends.

These arrangements are over and above the standard litter picking and waste arrangements and designed to deal with the elevated popularity of Wimbledon Park for these social activities. Officers will also review these arrangements over the course

of the seasonal period to ensure these arrangements address efficiently any issues with litter and waste from site users.

From Councillor Marsie Skeete to the Cabinet Member for Finance

I note that overall satisfaction with the council rose to 70% in the latest annual residents' survey. What analysis has the cabinet member made of the underlying reasons for this, and the variation in satisfaction levels for individual services?

Reply

The survey results show that the vast majority of Merton residents are satisfied with their local area as a place to live and that satisfaction with the way that the council runs things has increased since the last survey was carried out two years ago. People, particularly families, come and live in Merton because of our schools, parks and green spaces, libraries and sports and leisure facilities and this is reflected in the survey. More residents have also told us they feel safe in the borough and satisfaction with street lighting has increased.

The residents' survey was carried out soon after the largest service change that the council has made in recent times – to the recycling and rubbish collection service. This affected almost all households in the borough. Since the survey was done, recycling rates have continued to increase and action has been taken to improve street cleaning and the collection service. The council is working hard with Croydon, Sutton and Kingston, which together form South London Waste Partnership, to drive up Veolia's performance.

More service users than two years ago rated secondary education, primary education, libraries, leisure and sport facilities as good or very good.

From Councillor Daniel Holden to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport:

Does the cabinet member believe in nudge theory to change behaviour relating to parking?

Reply

Nudge theory is a concept in behavioral science, political theory and behavioral economics which proposes positive reinforcement, indirect suggestions and other means as ways to influence the behavior and decision making of groups or individuals.

The Council believes that most residents will make the right choices in light of clear information regarding the impact that the motor car has on air quality and the climate alongside sensible pricing to reduce demand. This will include suitable available healthy and affordable modes of transport [active and public].

Governments across the world have adopted nudge theory and established units to promote its use across a range of public policy areas. There is no reason to believe that its application is not suitable for parking and car use.

From Councillor Carl Quilliam to the Cabinet Member for Commerce, Leisure and Culture

Will the Cabinet member confirm the last time money was collected from the tennis courts at Joseph Hood Recreation Ground, Dundonald Recreation Ground and John Innes Park, how much was collected, what the charges were, and what the process was for deciding to reintroduce charges?

Reply

For clarity, charges are not being “reintroduced” at these three venues. Tennis has been a “pay to play” activity continuously for many years in Merton and the current prices reflect those prices levied in the historical past, uplifted by an appropriate percentage annually to reflect inflation.

Whereas in the past these three park sites had dedicated site staff, some of whom were posted on site at weekends mainly to collect sports fees, this ceased around 2012. The court takings at that time were typically of the order of £2-3k per annum per site only and therefore somewhat out of balance with the staffing costs required to collect these fees at a time when the service was the subject to significant savings pressures. Consequently, the income from these venues dropped to nil, or very close to nil.

A new technology based tennis court booking system, developed by the Lawn Tennis Association, is being adopted at four venues, including the three named sites. This electronic system will ensure that our existing fees and charges are more efficiently and effectively applied and at no cost to the Council.

From Councillor John Dehaney to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport

Would the cabinet member please provide information on what work the council is undertaking to improve conditions for tenants in the private-rented sector?

Reply

The Council is committed in improving housing conditions for tenants in the private rented sector. On the 3rd June 2019 the Cabinet member for Regeneration , Housing and Transport submitted a report to cabinet for approval setting out his plans for how the Council’s support to private rented sector tenants would be improved. This included the adoption of a new housing enforcement policy, the adoption of civil penalties and rent repayment orders and an indicative plan to develop selective licensing .In addition officers continue to discharge statutory housing functions in line with the Housing Act 2004 and have responded to 1253 cases of complaints of disrepair from private tenants. Officers continue to engage with private sector landlords both on a 121 basis and through its Landlord forum.

From Councillor James Holmes to the Cabinet Member for Schools and Adult Education:

The recent OFSTED inspection at Benedict Primary School downgraded their rating from 'requires improvement' to 'inadequate', what measures have been taken by the Cabinet Member since the inspection to improve performance?

Reply

Benedict is part of the Chapel Street Academy Trust, and therefore not a Local Authority School. The Local Authority keeps in regular contact with the Regional Schools' Commissioner (RSC) who has the responsibility for the performance of academies within their area. If the Local Authority has any concerns about the academies within Merton it is the role of the RSC to provide the challenge to the school. The Local Authority have expressed concerns to the RSC in the past about Benedict, particularly around financial management, and in light of the last Ofsted judgement the school received of 'requires improvement'. The Local Authority received reassurances from RSC, that in his view, the school was making progress in its improvement journey.

The process when an academy is judged to be 'inadequate' is led by the RSC, not the Local Authority, although the Local Authority keep in close contact with the RSC. The Assistant Director (Education) has had conversations with the RSC since the inspection to discuss Benedict. The decision about the future of Benedict (for example whether it stays with Chapel Street or moves to a different provider) will be made by the RSC following a conversation between the RSC and the Academy Trust which in turn would be scrutinised by the Head Teacher Board that the RSC works with. The Local Authority awaits the outcome of this initial decision.

The Local Authority is of the view that, whatever the governance arrangements, the school needs to be proceeding with school improvement activity immediately. As Benedict is not a Local Authority school, it is not working intensively with Merton School Improvement officers (for example, with a Merton Education Partner). Such support would not be automatic as Merton School Improvement is primarily funded by the Dedicated Schools Grant (funding made available for maintained schools), but it is available for the Trust to use through purchasing a Service Level Agreement, as three of the academies in Merton already do. Since the inspection, the school have bought in a small amount of support from Merton School Improvement, but they continue to source their core school improvement from the Trust.

From Councillor Agatha Akyigyina to the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Health and the Environment

Can the cabinet member provide an update on Improving Healthcare Together following the recent publication of the draft Integrated Impact Assessment and Clinical Senate Report?

Reply

As Council will be aware, Improving Healthcare Together is the NHS programme looking at a potential reconfiguration of services at Epsom and St Helier Trust.

06: Non ST Questions

On 26 June, two new papers were published: the draft Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA), and the Clinical Senates Report.

The IIA builds on work previously undertaken by the NHS, including the Deprivation Impact Analysis, which was commissioned following a request by the Council. It explores equalities, health, travel and environmental impacts, among other things. The Council was involved in the steering group which oversaw the development of the IIA, and the Leader has sent a number of letters to the Independent Chair of the steering group to make the Council's position clear.

The Clinical Senates Report was undertaken by the independent Clinical Senates of London and the South East and reviews the clinical model developed by Improving Healthcare Together. The report makes 94 recommendations for the programme to take account of.

The Council is in the process of comprehensively reviewing both documents and will be formally responding in due course.

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

Can the Cabinet Member please clarify to what extent the council held any discussions with TFL regarding TFL's misguided closure of the District Line throughout the weekend at the start of the Tennis Championships just when tourists were arriving from around the world?

Reply

The Council works closely with TfL who ultimately are responsible for the safe operation of the transport network and we recognise that some essential works cannot be delayed. We were pleased to see that Transport for London managed to complete their work on improving the District Line between Saturday 29th and Sunday 30th June, prior to the Wimbledon Championships starting on Monday 1st July 2019. Wimbledon is the only part of London accessible by all four public transport modes of tube, train, bus and tram and we look forward to continuing to work with Transport for London on improvements to these services.

From Councillor Aidan Mundy to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport

Can the cabinet member please give further details on the allocation of the neighbourhood fund schemes and proposals for ward allocation funded schemes from the Community Infrastructure Levy?

Reply

Following a trial in 2018, funding of £15,000 is available for every ward in Merton to spend on specific types of public space projects under the Merton's Ward Allocation Scheme. The scheme was approved by Cabinet on 14th January 2019. The scheme is in the early stages of the three-year lifetime – from April 2019 ward councillors have been able to select from a list of project types to be funded by the £15,000 for

their wards. The list is made up of small-scale public space project types which are not already covered by the council's existing highways and green spaces contracts and meet criteria set out by the government for spending the Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy.

From Councillor Andrew Howard to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport:

The proposed parking fees increase will have varying impacts on different communities, what discussions has the Cabinet Member had with Age UK Merton and care homes who will be disproportionately effected?

Reply

Whilst we have not specifically consulted with individual community groups the parking charges consultation was very widely advertised and was extended in duration. Articles were placed in My Merton distributed to every household, 6,000 street signs were placed across the Borough, statutory consultees, resident and business associations were asked to provide their views, which led to over 3,000 responses being received.

From Councillor Anthony Fairclough to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport

What evidence is there that the proposed increases in parking permit charges in CPZs will reduce car ownership?

Reply

Price is a long established and recognised economic tool to manage demand. Where prices remain low demand increases, all other things being equal. Over the last 10 years where car parking and permit prices have been frozen the number of cars registered in Merton rose from 69,500 to 71,900.

Decisions on car ownership take price into account. This might be at the point when a decision on car replacement is being made or at some other point in time but car owners or prospective car owners will weigh up future costs as well as alternate transport options. This administration believes that Merton is not isolated from these economic principles and that sensible and appropriate pricing strategies for parking and permits will assist in reducing car use and ownership.

From Councillor Ed Gretton to the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Health and the Environment:

Does the Cabinet Member believe that local residents are satisfied with the administration's ability to manage rubbish and street cleaning?

Reply

The Annual Residents survey conducted earlier this provides a snapshot of satisfaction with a range of services and showed that at that time resident satisfaction with waste collection and street cleaning had dropped when compared to previous years. Whilst disappointing, this was perhaps not surprising given the point in time that

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the survey was carried out [Jan / Feb2019], coming so soon after the largest waste collection service change the borough has experienced.

Since that survey was undertaken, a further survey was undertaken by West Co on behalf of the South London Waste Partnership in March 2019, which asked residents about the new recycling and rubbish collection service. This showed much higher levels of satisfaction, with 82% of residents surveyed expressing satisfaction with the waste collection service they receive and 84% stating that they have had no issues regarding the service.

However, I accept that for residents in some parts of the borough the service is still working as well as we would like it to, which is why we are working hard with officers and Veolia to improve performance.

I will be writing to all councillors shortly to announce some of the initiatives we are taking and am keen to visit as many wards over the summer as possible to understand the particular challenges faced in different parts of the borough and what solutions might be required.

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From Councillor Stan Anderson to the Cabinet Member for Women and Equalities

Can the cabinet member provide information on how representative the elected members are of Merton's population in terms of gender and ethnicity?

Reply

The council and local political parties are committed to attracting prospective councillors who are as representative of the local population as possible. Merton's councillors are a diverse group, including many younger councillors who work full time, those with caring responsibilities, a wide age range, 37% women and approximately 25% from visible BAME communities. The council doesn't currently collect data on gender and ethnicities and therefore I have instructed the Head of Democracy Services to collect this data from elected members as soon as possible.

From Councillor Nick McLean to the Leader of the Council

What discussions has the Leader of the Council had with the Local Borough Commander and MOPAC to save Wimbledon Police Station since the last ordinary meeting of the council on 3rd April?

Reply

The BCU Commander Sally Benatar addressed the Scrutiny Commission on the 24th April and said the following

Police stations

Sally Benatar read out a prepared statement:

“ The intention set out in our consultation document in 2017 was for Mitcham Police Station to be the 24/7 front counter location and Response parade site for Merton Borough, with Earlsfield Police Station remaining the Response parade site for Wandsworth Borough and with Wimbledon Police Station to be sold.

After eleven months' experience of working at greater scale across the boroughs, it has been identified that there is a need to review the operational implications of continuing to operate with two separate Response parade sites for Merton and Wandsworth, as opposed to having a shared parade site covering both boroughs. This internal review is now taking place.”

In response to concerns raised by members of the Commission, Sally Benatar said that she had requested this review to investigate the most efficient way of using police resources now that these were deployed at greater scale within the BCU. She stressed that this was a separate matter to the location of the 24/7 front office (police station) and that there would continue to be one of these in each borough, the location of which would be a matter for MOPAC.

The Commission and the Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Engagement and Equalities requested further detail of the review to be made available in a briefing to councillors. Members of the Commission said they wished to be fully sighted on decisions that would have an impact on policing in Merton and that there should be a public consultation. Sally Benatar said that there had not been a public consultation

when the Kingston and Richmond Response parade sites were merged and there was no plan to have a public consultation on how Response policing is delivered as this is an operational policing decision. The public consultation on front counters was a separate issue. Sally Benatar undertook to take the Commission's concerns back and said that she would share a briefing note with them as soon as she could.

RESOLVED: the Commission agreed to invite the BCU Commander to a future meeting for an update on police estate matters as well as crime statistics and other policing issues.

From Councillor Rebecca Lanning to the Cabinet Member for Voluntary Sector, Partnerships and Community Safety

Since being the first borough to work with the Met on rolling out the Ask for Angela campaign in 2016, can the cabinet member update on statistics of gender-based hate crime in Merton?

Reply

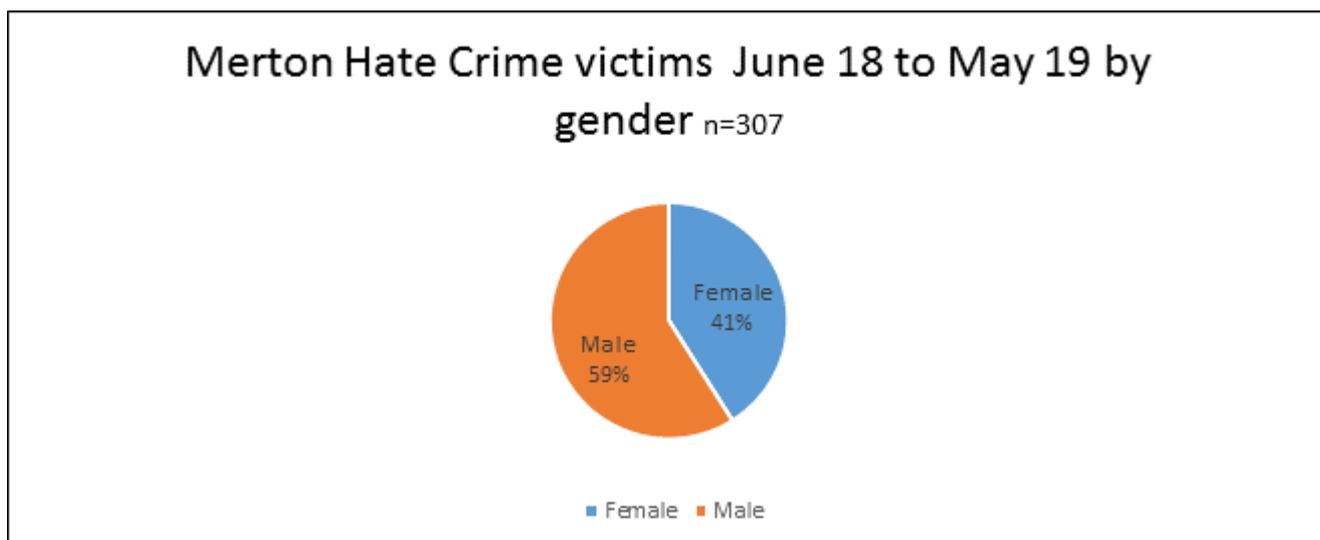
Nationally and in the MPS the five monitored strands of hate crime are:

- Race;
- Religion/faith;
- Sexual orientation; (Gay/lesbian)
- Disability;
- Gender-identity (Transgender)

Details of hate crime victims and offences for each of the above strands are publically available via

<https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/mayors-office-policing-and-crime-mopac/data-and-statistics/hate-crime-dashboard>

Work undertaken locally as part of the 2nd hate crime profile to be published later this month shows that the gender split for Merton victims of the above hate crime stands in the last 12 months is :-



When this exercise was first completed the previous year (aug 17 to Jul 18) the relative proportions were 60% male and 40% female.

Misogyny

While some police forces are trialling, the recording of Misogynistic incidents it is not currently a criminal offence and the MPS are not participating in the trials.

So for London there are no figures for gender based hate crimes

For Sexual offences (rape and other sexual offences) the majority of victims (89%) are female.

From Councillor Eloise Bailey to the Cabinet Member for Woman and Equalities

What will the cabinet member's role overseeing equality impact assessments (EIA) involve on a day-to-day level? And how will she seek to improve the EIA carried out by the Council, and their ability to change Council policy?

Reply

The Equality Analysis (EA) process is well embedded in the council's day-to-day business. The Equality and Community Cohesion Officer supports the process by regularly briefing the Senior Leadership team, Departmental Management Teams and supporting individual managers to conduct EAs and consider the equalities implications of proposed changes to policy and service delivery.

Managers have the tools to robustly conduct EAs for policy changes and service reviews. A framework is in place that ensures that the basket of saving proposals put up to Cabinet are accompanied by EAs that have considered the effect that the proposed changes will have on the Protected Characteristics.

The EA is constantly under review to reflect any changes in legislation, guidance and case law. The EA process is overseen by the Cabinet Member for Women and Equalities and this is discussed on a regular basis with the Head of Policy, Strategy and Partnerships.

From Councillor Russell Makin to the Cabinet Member for Women and Equalities

Can the cabinet member outline the reasons for the inequalities in life expectancy between the east and the west of the borough, and the work being done to address this?

Reply

The reasons for the inequalities in life expectancy between the East and West of the borough are multi-factorial and span the whole life course from before birth until old age.

The Annual Report of the Director of Public Health in 2018 (<https://www2.merton.gov.uk/Annual-Health-Report2018.pdf>) described these factors, the current situation in Merton and the range of work in short, medium and long-term which could be done to address them. One of the goals of the current strategy of the Health and Wellbeing Board has been to reduce the gap between East and West. Examples are the work to develop the Wilson Hospital for health and wellbeing and the implementation of social prescribing in GP practices in the East. The recently refreshed Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2019-2024 "A healthy place for healthy lives" has built on this, with a set of principles and ways of working, the first of which is to tackle health inequalities.

Complementing the work of the Health and Wellbeing Board, many other council services and functions contribute to a reduction in inequalities. Corporate capacity to bridge the gap was the main strategic theme of the November 2017 council; a summary paper (<https://democracy.merton.gov.uk/documents/s20179/Strategic%20Theme%20Nov%2017%20final.pdf>) summarised the work which continues.

From Councillor Brenda Fraser to the Cabinet Member for Voluntary Sector, Partnerships and Community Safety

I'd like to congratulate the cabinet member on a wonderful Windrush Day 2019 celebration. Can she tell me how the council will continue to support the Windrush generation?

Reply

We are proud of the borough's Windrush Day 2019 celebrations and are grateful for the support received from the West Indian Friends and Families Association and Black and Minority Ethnic Voice, (particularly with the heritage and thanksgiving service) that made the events so successful. We will look to see how we can celebrate Windrush Day annually.

We will continue to work with these organisations and will be guided by them to try to meet the needs of the Windrush Generation, many of whom are now elderly and may require support from our Adult Social Care provision as well as sign posting to the support available in the voluntary sector.

Additionally, the council has recently promoted the Windrush Compensation scheme to local residents by including an article in My Merton.

From Councillor Mary Curtin to the Cabinet Member for Women and Equalities

Can the cabinet member outline what work is being done by the council to better understand 'hidden' disabilities, and therefore provide more appropriate services to them?

Reply

The Department for Transport has recently published new guidance which aims to extend access to Blue Badge parking permits to people with 'hidden' disabilities. This is aimed at people with conditions such as dementia, autism, anxiety disorders or reduced mobility who can experience significant difficulties and stress in finding a parking space. Problems with transport for people with hidden disabilities is often an underlying factor in isolation and loneliness which can exacerbate their condition. These changes should help combat the negative impact of road travel difficulties for people with these types of condition.

The new guidance is due to come into effect on 31 August. Officers who administer the Blue Badge scheme in Merton are working closely with colleagues from across the council to operationalise these changes. The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) provides a detailed assessment of health needs for the borough and this has recently been supplemented by a disability health and care profile and a severe mental illness profile published in 2018.

The council published a revised Autism Strategy in 2018 along with an autism profile. The strategy and action plan take a whole life course approach, encompassing children, young people and adults with autism and taking into consideration the needs of families and carers. An Autism Partnership Steering group has been established to support the implementation and monitoring of the plan.

As part of the newly expanded Strategic Partner Grants programme we launched a new peer support and wellbeing programme with Imagine Independence in July which supports people with a range of mental health issues including Depression, Anxiety, Bipolar and Agoraphobia. We have just launched a new service for adults with Autism with Merton Mencap as part of the grants program for people that need support but would not normally have eligible needs via the care act.

The council has contributed funding and is working with partners across London to promote www.good-thinking.uk which is a London Digital well-being service. This has been created in response to the most common mental health issues experienced in London for which early intervention and pro-active self-management of wellbeing can have a positive impact (anxiety, sleep deprivation, stress and low mood). As part of the work of the Health and Wellbeing Board we are working with colleagues in Thrive London to develop a series of community conversations in Merton to understand what matters to residents around mental health and wellbeing, to campaign against stigma and to identify areas of improvement in mental health and wellbeing in Merton. These will take place in September and October 2019.

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Committee: Council

Date: 10 July 2019

Agenda item:

Wards: All

Subject: Recruitment for Assistant Director Corporate Governance

Lead officer: Ged Curran, Chief Executive

Lead member: Councillor Mark Allison – Cabinet Member Corporate Services

Contact officer: Caroline Holland, Director of Corporate Services

Recommendations:

- A To approve the recruitment to the post of Assistant Director of Corporate Governance and Monitoring Officer at a salary exceeding £100,000.
-

Reasons for urgency: The Chair has approved the submission of this report as a matter of urgency as the Assistant Director Corporate Governance will be leaving the organisation in October 2019 and this role requires full Council approval before the recruitment process can commence.

Purpose of report

- 1.1 The post of Assistant Director of Corporate Governance currently fulfils the role of statutory Monitoring Officer jointly for Merton and Richmond Councils. The council is required by section 5 Local Government and Housing Act 1989 to appoint a Monitoring Officer to have responsibility for the authority's governance systems and lawful decision making of the Council.
- 1.2 The post is also responsible for the Council's shared legal service, the South London legal Partnership (SLLP), delivering legal services to the London Boroughs of Richmond, Wandsworth, Sutton, Merton and the Royal Borough of Kingston. In addition, the post has responsibility for Merton Council's Audit Service, Democratic Services, Elections and Information Governance teams.
- 1.3 The role is a challenging one whereby the post holder is required to have complex specialist skills and be able to lead in an ever-changing environment.
- 1.4 The pay scale for this post is currently £94,248 to £98,484 plus a market supplement of £24,771. The total cost of the post including on-costs is £158k based on the top of the scale with the current market supplement. Of the total cost, 75% is met by the SLLP budget shared between the partners based on their usage of the service. The remaining 25% is split between Merton and Richmond Councils. Based on the 18/19 use of the shared service, Merton

Council's total contribution for the post is expected to be £41,000 for 2019/20. Salaries will normally increase from 1 April each year following a nationally determined pay award.

- 1.5 The Pay Policy Statement 2019/2020 requires the approval of full Council for any new appointment where the salary is £100,000 per annum or more and this agreement should be sought at the start of the recruitment process.

2. Details

- 2.1 The Assistant Director of Corporate Governance is leaving the Council in October 2019.
- 2.2 The recruitment campaign for the post of Assistant Director of Corporate Governance will be handled by an executive search agent who will be required to provide evidence of their track record of successfully recruiting to senior local government roles.
- 2.3 The Council will take advice on an appropriate salary level in the current market. However it is anticipated this will be broadly in line with the current salary of the post at £120,000- £125,000. The actual salary on appointment will be dependent on the experience of the candidate.
- 2.4 The appointment will be considered by the Appointments Committee in accordance with the Constitution. The appointment will be subject to final approval by full Council in the autumn.

3. Alternative options

- 3.1 The Council is required by statute to appoint a Monitoring Officer.

4. Consultation undertaken or proposed

- 4.1 The appointment process will involve the participation of representatives of Richmond, Wandsworth, Sutton, and Kingston Councils at an officer level.

5. Timetable

- 5.1 An appointments committee will be convened as soon as possible to agree and commence the recruitment process. The committee will interview shortlisted candidates and make a recommendation to full council to appoint in the Autumn period.

6. Financial, Resource and Property Implications

- 6.1 The cost of this post is shared by the councils within the SLLP. Each council contributes towards to cost of the post, with Merton Council's contribution being £41,000. Merton's contribution is met from the existing revenue budget allocation.
- 6.2 The executive search agent's fee will be approximately £15,000 and advertising costs will be in the region of £6,000.

7. Legal and statutory implications

- 7.1 Section 5 Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (as amended) requires each council to appoint a Monitoring Officer.
- 7.2 This post is covered by the Employee Procedure Rules (part 4H) of the constitution. The Appointments Committee is responsible for appointing to the Monitoring Officer's post. Once the recruitment process is completed in accordance with the Council's recruitment procedures an offer of appointment cannot be made by the Appointments Committee until the Committee has notified the Chief Executive of the name of the person to whom the Committee wishes to make an offer. The Chief Executive is then to notify the details to every member of the Cabinet. The appointment will only be made where no material or well-founded objections from the Cabinet have been received. Committee should therefore build this process in the recruitment planning.
- 7.3 In all other respects, the process must comply with the Council's recruitment procedures.
- 7.4 The appointment of the Monitoring Officer requires the approval of full Council.
- 7.5 As with all appointments of officers and staff, the appointment must be made on merit in accordance with section 7 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.
- 7.6 In line with statutory requirements the Council's constitution and Pay Policy Statement require full Council approval for salaries over £100,000.

8. Human rights, equalities and community cohesion implications

- 8.1 The contents of this report are designed to ensure that the Council's processes are human rights and equalities compliant.
- 8.2 It is unlawful to discriminate on grounds of gender, race, disability, age, religion and belief and sexual orientation. This refers to both direct and indirect discrimination. In effect the process has to be evaluated against three tests (1) intention (2) method (3) effect. Where there is an intention to discriminate on any of the prohibited grounds, this would be unlawful. Where there is no such intention but the recruitment methods used are discriminatory, then the outcome may be open to challenge. Where the intention and method are sound but the effect is shown to have disproportionate effect on a particular category of applicant then the outcome may be open to challenge.

9. Crime and Disorder Implications

- 9.1 None

10. Risk management and health and safety implications

10.1 None