

Merton Council

Council

2 April 2014

Supplementary agenda –

**Public Questions and the Responses,
Councillor Priority Questions and the Responses,
and a Further tabled Amendment**

5.	Public Questions to Cabinet Members and the responses	1 - 4
6.	Councillors' Ordinary Priority Questions to Cabinet Members and the responses	5 - 10
7.(a)	Strategic theme: Councillors' Priority Questions to Cabinet Members and the responses.	11 - 16
19.	Tabled Amendments	
(d)	Amendment 1 to item 9 (Conservative)	17 - 20

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Council 2 April 2014 Public questions

Procedure

The Mayor will call your name and ask if you have a supplementary question arising from the answer you have received.

If you do not have a supplementary question then simply respond thank you, no.

If you do have a supplementary question respond thank you, yes. You will be shown to a seat in the chamber where you will ask your supplementary question. Make sure you use the microphone.

Having put your question, please be seated whilst the Cabinet member responds.

Once the response has been given, please return to your seat in the public gallery.

The questions and answers and all supplementary questions and replies will be published on Merton's website after the meeting.

**From Charles Bush
To the Cabinet Member for Environmental Sustainability and Regeneration
Question**

What plans do the Council have to ensure that the traffic changes envisaged under the mini-Holland Scheme do not result in residential roads, like Gladstone Road, becoming "rat runs" for traffic heading to the South Wimbledon area.

Reply

There is no basis whatsoever, beyond scaremongering, for suggesting that the Mini Holland bid proposals, which were signed up to in detail by all political groups on the Council, will lead to residential roads becoming 'rat runs'. All our proposals to date have been subject to scrutiny by independent expert traffic consultants as well as advice from Merton Council officers.

Whilst Merton has not be selected for full mini-Holland status, the borough's submission has been the subject of praise from the Mayor and Andrew Gilligan, the Mayor's Cycling Commissioner, and the Council will remain part of the mini-Holland programme. The commitment has also been made that substantial public funds will be provided to deliver some of the schemes included in the bid. We are expecting early discussions with Andrew Gilligan and TfL on the funding and the schemes to which they will be applied.

It is important to emphasise that the projects forming part of the mini-Holland programme will be subject to detailed design, testing and consultation with residents and businesses to ensure that the proposals work and are fully supported locally.

**From Daniel Holden
To the Cabinet Member for Environmental Cleanliness and Parking**

Question

"Many residents in flats in Hillside ward are being penalised on parking issues by planning rules saying they can't apply for permits. Until recently many could park nearby. This means they have to move their cars further away even though some roads nearby do have spaces, what will this council do to help these hardworking people?"

Reply

In line with the Mayor of London's London Plan, the council can grant planning permission on condition that new residents do not receive an on-street parking permit from the council. New residents should be aware via their purchase that the property will not be eligible for a council parking permit.

One of the main reasons for permit free parking is to protect existing residents from excessive parking and congestion. If landowners choose not to provide parking on-site then it is important that the council takes some action to prevent established residential areas from excessive parking and the conflict this can cause.

The alternative is for the council to issue more parking permits than there are parking places. If permits were offered to properties that are currently permit-free, even if it was for parking zones further away that are currently perceived to have capacity, local residents in these further away areas would be disadvantaged by the added parked vehicles and local congestion this approach would bring.

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1. From Councillor Janice Howard to the Cabinet Member for Environmental Sustainability and Regeneration

I see that the Department for Transport is to undertake research into the effectiveness of 20mph limits. Can the Cabinet Member update us on the progress of the council's own local research into this matter following the motion passed by Council back in November 2012?

Reply

The Department for Transport has recognised the growing trend of 20mph limit and zones being implemented across the country and is undertaking research. Unfortunately the report will not be ready until 2017 reflecting the difficulties of research in this area of work and the delays in getting reliable evidence showing the impact of traffic interventions. Locally we have obtained pan London support for a piece of work to look at published evidence from existing trials and schemes across the country.

We are also undertaking speed and volume surveys at all of our existing 20mph sites across the borough over the next few months.

As reported to Scrutiny Members recently, this will be available to report in autumn 2014.

2. From Councillor Laxmi Attawar to the Cabinet Member for Finance

What would be the impact on the council's finances of reducing council tax by 10%?

Reply

The Revenue Estimates for 2014/15 include £75.049 million income from Council Tax for Merton usage. A 10% reduction in this figure would result in a loss of income of £7.5 million per year. This would be in addition to the savings already identified as part of the Business Planning Process for 2014-18. Over 4 years, that amounts to £30m that might have been available for expenditure on Council services.

3. From Councillor Oonagh Moulton to the Leader of the Council

Can the Leader tell me how many councillor questions have been submitted in total at each of the Full Council meetings over the last two years?

Reply

Number of councillor questions at Council meetings, February 2012-February 2014

	TOTAL Priority questions	TOTAL Non priority questions			Total council questions
			Non Priority questions by political group		

Agenda item 6 – Councillors ordinary priority questions and answers

				Labour	Con	Merton Coalition	MPWIR	Lib Dems		
Feb-14	21	77		1	41	31	0	4		98
Nov-13	20	44		3	22	13	0	6		64
Sep-13	20	59		0	37	19	0	3		79
Jul-13	20	82		16	51	10	0	5		102
Mar-13	19	21		4	11	-	2	4		40
Feb-13	18	49		1	43	-	0	5		67
Nov-12	18	41		4	33	-	0	4		59
Sep-12	18	37		2	31	-	0	4		55
Jul-12	18	42		4	33	-	0	5		60
Mar-12	18	20		2	17	-	0	1		38
Feb-12	18	28		2	22	-	0	4		46

4. From Councillor Iain Dysart to the Cabinet Member for Environmental Sustainability and Regeneration

Further to the outcome of the Council's Mini-Holland bid, resulting in the receipt of less money than hoped, by when does he intend to progress to take forward the specific agreement of this Council to approach the Mayor's office regarding the extension of the cycle hire scheme to Merton, or would he rather I forgot about it?

Reply

Although Merton didn't achieve full mini-Holland borough status, our bid was highly commended by the Mayor's team and we've been told we will receive at least £10m over possibly 3 years. This compares with a usual spend on cycling of about £300k pa.

I have been in touch with the Mayor's cycling commissioner, Andrew Gilligan, who tells me that he is writing to me with a view to our meeting soon to discuss Merton's funding and to agree which projects within our bid will go forward. What we are proposing is our own cycle hire scheme, to invest in Brompton Docks, of which there are numerous working examples in South West London and Surrey, as part of a partnership with Southwest Trains, rather than an immediate extension on the central London scheme which does not currently run to Merton's border. There are logistical difficulties in extending the existing Barclays Cycle Hire to outer London.

In addition to Brompton Docks, the Council is also collaborating with South London Partnership to determine whether the HourBike hire system might be a suitable alternative for Outer London. We are currently exploring this in partnership with Kingston, Sutton, Croydon, and Richmond.

Agenda item 6 – Councillors ordinary priority questions and answers

5. From Councillor Miles Windsor to the Cabinet Member for Environmental Sustainability and Regeneration

To be answered by the Cabinet Member for Environmental Cleanliness and Parking

Noise pollution and noise aggravation can have a serious and adverse effect on the lives of residents in Merton. Can the Cabinet Member update me on the council's current noise nuisance enforcement pilot?

Reply

The Environmental Health Service has been providing an Out of Hours Noise enforcement service on Friday nights since the beginning of the calendar year. This service complements the long-standing Saturday night service but is supported by officers from both Croydon and Richmond Councils with whom we are working on a shared Regulatory Services.

Despite local publicity and changes to the Council's website, take up of the pilot service was originally limited but now mirrors the level of demand being experienced on the Saturday night service. A more detailed analysis of the demand for the service and enforcement action required will take place at the end of the 6 month trial period.

6. From Councillor Brenda Fraser to the Cabinet Member for Community and Culture

Could he estimate how much a new performing arts centre for Wimbledon might cost?

Reply

Two examples of performing arts centres recently built are the Curve Theatre in Leicester, planned in 2000, at a cost of £61m - which was £35m over budget - whilst the more recently refurbished Midlands Arts Centre was refurbished in 2010 at a cost of £15m. A new performing arts centre for Wimbledon would require £20m as a minimum in construction alone, before running costs were factored in.

Merton, including Wimbledon, is however already blessed with 5 permanent performing arts venues of various sizes which, together with occasional performing areas including our parks, leisure centres and of course our libraries, makes our borough an excellent venue for providing sustainable performing arts for the long term.

7. From Councillor Richard Hilton to the Cabinet Member for Finance

Is the Annual Mayor's Ball, to be held this year on April 26th an official Council event supported by Council staff or a private event run by you/the Mayor?

Reply

Agenda item 6 – Councillors ordinary priority questions and answers

The mayor's charity, an independent charitable trust, runs events such as this as fundraising events to raise money for charitable giving. A small amount of council officer time is used to support the mayor's charity. It is important that the dignity of the Mayor and the Mayor's charitable work is maintained. This administration does not propose to interfere in the Mayor's running of the Annual Ball, including decisions about who is invited and what standards of behaviour are required from guests, although of course in extreme circumstances instances of unacceptable behaviour can be investigated by the Standards Committee or other authorities if required.

8. From Councillor Suzanne Grocott to the Cabinet Member for Finance

How much did it cost to design, print, distribute and display the posters stating that "council tax has been frozen"? How many posters were printed, how many sites used and was there any foregone revenue from a commercial alternative?

Reply

The frozen council tax posters are currently displayed on the 48 advertising boards across the borough at the cost of £649.50. This covers all design, print and display costs, and works out at £13 per unit. No commercial revenue was lost as a result of the frozen council tax campaign.

9. From Councillor Sam Thomas to the Cabinet Member for Environmental Cleanliness and Parking

How much would it cost to re-open the Weir Road recycling centre in terms of both capital and revenue?

Reply

Firstly there is no suitable site available, the previous site is currently being leased to another company, the length of the lease being until 2036. Therefore the Weir Road site will not be available before then. The council's estates section have confirmed that there is no available land to accommodate a similar sized plot, which therefore leaves the options to privately rent or purchase land with suitable planning permission.

If a site were rented the additional revenue cost would, we estimate, be approximately £28,000 per calendar month, £336,000 each year. In addition the cost of management of the site would need to be added. These would be approximately £200k per annum which doesn't include haulage costs.

Therefore current revenue costs would approximately be in the region of over £500k annually, which equates to an increase in Council Tax of approximately 0.7%.

This does not include the Capital costs required to set up a new site including provision of bins, equipment and signage.

As an alternative the average purchase price for low grade industrial use site in the Wimbledon area would be approximately £3m, or the equivalent of approximately half of the cost of the Pelham Primary School expansion, for example.

Agenda item 6 – Councillors ordinary priority questions and answers

10. From Councillor Richard Hilton to the Cabinet Member for Finance

Can the Cabinet Member please give me a list of:

- (a) The total expenditure on corporate cards by department within the last financial year and
- (b) All individual spending totalling over £500 by staff or Councillors within the last financial year.

Reply

The Table below summarises spend by department using “purchasing cards” for the financial year 2012/13:

Department	2012/13
	£
Corporate Services	97,596.75
Children Schools & Families	190,443.98
Community & Housing	119,983.71
Environment & Regeneration	105,007.23
Mitcham Common Conservators	4,310.67
Merton and Sutton Joint Cemetery Board	7,222.12
Total for Merton	524,564.46

N.B. No Councillor has a purchasing card.

All individual spending totalling over £500 up to 31st December within the last financial year are shown on the hyperlink below: This will be updated to 31st March as part of the process of closing of accounts

<http://www.merton.gov.uk/council/dp-foi/opendata/spending.htm>

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Agenda item 7 – Councillors strategic theme priority questions and answers

1. From Councillor Gilli Lewis-Lavender to the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health

Does the Cabinet Member agree that we can expect to see the number of residents with dementia increasing in the future as more residents and carers seek help and advice?

Reply

Our Joint Strategic Needs Assessment states: “Based on current trends Merton’s population would increase by 16,000 people between 2011 and 2017. A significant feature of Merton’s population in 2017 is the changing age profile of the borough’s residents, with the most notable growth in those under the age of 9 yrs. and 65+.

In Merton it is estimated that 7.2% of women and 5.3% of men aged over 65 have dementia (2007), by 2021 this is predicted to reduce to 6.7% for women and increase to 5.6% for men.

With the potential increase in the numbers of people aged over 65, if nothing else changes (i.e. proportionally the prevalence of current long-term conditions doesn't change), then there will be a significant increase in the absolute numbers of people with dementia.”

In order to address this we have undertaken the following actions:

- The council has added £1m in growth each year to the social care budget recognising the demographic pressures caused by an increase in numbers of older people and those of working age with disabilities
- We have launched our Dementia Action Alliance for Merton whereby the council and its partner agencies commit to 3 actions to improve the lives of people with dementia and their carers
- We have produced a strategy for dementia in Merton, overseen by a multi-agency steering group

We successfully bid for £350,000 from the Department of Health to improve the building in Mitcham used for day support, have added council capital, and are re launching this Dementia Hub in June 2014. This is run by the Alzheimer’s Society and the service is already reaching over 300 people

2. From Councillor Stan Anderson to the Leader of the Council

What has the Leader done to support the campaign to save St Helier Hospital?

Reply

Over the last 12 months I have undertaken the following in support of the Save St Helier Hospital campaign:

- Written to the Secretary of State for Health asking for clarification on who makes the final decision on St Helier. The Secretary of State confirmed that he makes the final decision.
- Encouraged all Labour Councillors to write to GPs in their ward to urge support for St Helier hospital and written myself to the GPs in my own ward of Ravensbury.

Agenda item 7 – Councillors strategic theme priority questions and answers

- Commissioned an investigation from independent healthcare experts into the BSBV business case.
- Spoken to countless local residents encouraging them to sign petitions in support of the hospital and to put a “Save St Helier” poster in their window
- Attended meetings of a number of local Save St Helier groups and facilitated the use of the council chamber and the Civic Centre foyer for meetings and stalls organised by local residents groups
- Ordered banners for the front of the Civic Centre to encourage local people to support the St Helier campaign.
- Written to the Secretary of State to ask for the re-instatement of the £219m investment in St Helier Hospital and to seek clarification of comments from NHS England which suggest the local NHS is “planning for failure” of local hospitals.

Attended the recent handing over to the Chief Executive of the CCG of 13,000 signatures from local people in support of maintaining services at St Helier hospital.

3. From Councillor David Williams to the Leader of the Council

On 6 March 2003 Cllr Alambritis was elected in the Ravensbury by-election styling himself as the Labour Party Save St Helier Hospital Candidate. 11 years on how does he rate the success of his campaign in terms of improvements to the services there compared with the other General Hospitals serving Merton residents (Mayday, St George's and Kingston), which have all seen major investment programmes in the interim?

Reply

I'm glad Cllr Williams remembers so vividly my by-election win in Ravensbury 11 years ago. I'm sure he will also recall that on being elected I worked closely with Siobhain McDonagh and together we persuaded the then Labour government to invest £219m in re-developing St Helier hospital. However, since that time his own party have taken power nationally and, as has only recently been confirmed, the £219m earmarked for the re-development of St Helier hospital now no longer features in the local NHS's long term strategic plan. I have written to the Secretary of State, Jeremy Hunt, to object to this and to ask that his government re-instate this investment.

4. From Councillor Iain Dysart to the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health

How does she consider the promotion of health and well-being in Merton to have been served by savings decisions made or reaffirmed at the recent Budget meeting?

Reply

In setting its budget and medium term financial strategy, the council has sought throughout to protect front line services as far as possible, and it has protected the public health grant. Whilst there have been difficult decisions to make in the detail,

Agenda item 7 – Councillors strategic theme priority questions and answers

the councils overall strategy has been supported if we look at the evidence of resident satisfaction and the peer review of Health and Wellbeing.

5. From Councillor Debbie Shears to the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health

Is the Cabinet Member aware of any firm proposals made by the CCG to close any services at St Helier hospital now that the Better Services Better Value review is off the table?

Reply

Although the six south west London CCGs and NHS England (who commission specialised services in south west London) have just begun working on their new strategy for local health services, in their most recent public statement in February they stated the following:

- “We recognise that the status quo is even less of an option now than it was when the BSBV programme started.”
- “We unanimously support the clinical case for change set out as part of the BSBV programme.”
- “We will use the detailed and thorough analysis developed through the BSBV programme, setting out expected future patient need and provider trust staffing and finances, to develop our future commissioning strategies.”

In addition, NHS England has written to say that the local NHS is “preparing for clinical and financial failure” and that local hospitals will not be granted Foundation Trust status “since the provider landscape is unsustainable”.

In light of the above, it is clear that the assumptions behind the discredited BSBV proposals remain at the heart of the CCGs’ future strategy. Added to this, the recent removal of the sign heralding the promised £219m investment in St Helier has made residents all the more suspicious that services at St Helier remain at risk.

6. From Councillor Agatha Akyigyina to the Cabinet Member for Community and Culture

Does he believe the new Morden Park Leisure Centre will contribute to health outcomes in Morden and could he update us on progress with replacing it?

Reply

Yes, the new Morden Park Leisure Centre will contribute to health outcomes in the Morden area as it will give families, school children and local people many and varied sports and leisure opportunities to take part in and improve their physical and mental well-being. The first stage consultation is taking place at this time and local people are being asked what they would like to see in such a facility. We look forward to receiving the findings of this work in due course to inform the next stages of this development.

Agenda item 7 – Councillors strategic theme priority questions and answers

7. From Councillor Richard Hilton to the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health

What, if any, enforcement action has the Cabinet Member pushed for with regard to the continued breach of planning rules by Rapid Ready Mix in Lower Morden ward which threatens the health of residents in the area by subjecting them to poor air quality?

Reply

Cllr Andrew Judge is the Cabinet Member responsible for this area and I know he is fully aware of the importance of taking health concerns into account where they are relevant. The Council has invested significant resources in purchasing specialist air quality monitoring equipment and using it to monitor air quality in the area around Rapid Ready Mix. To date this has failed to identify any health concerns regarding air quality.

We recently met with residents and assured them of this and we are arranging a full briefing for residents by the laboratory responsible for the testing. We will be keeping this matter under review.

Quite separately, and unrelated to air quality issues, we are taking enforcement action against this landowner for breach of planning conditions.

8. From Councillor Maurice Groves to the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health

Could the Cabinet Member tell me if she is supportive of the building of the helipad at St George's hospital?

Reply

I welcome proposals that will lead to better health outcomes for Merton residents, and would like to thank the charity responsible for the £1m donation towards it, the County Air Ambulance Trust HELP appeal. I hope the helipad will speed up the time it takes to transfer major trauma patients, such as road traffic accidents, shootings and stabbings, to St George's. Nonetheless there will still be a vital need for local A&E departments such as that at St Helier hospital and I think local people are very disappointed that due to Clause 119 of the Care Bill, well run hospitals like St George's (or indeed St Helier) can be closed by a Minister. If St George's has a helipad that should not be seen as an excuse to argue that St Helier no longer needs an A&E.

9. From Councillor Sam Thomas to the Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care

Could she update us on the next steps for St Helier hospital?

Reply

Agenda item 7 – Councillors strategic theme priority questions and answers

The South West London Collaborative Commissioning partnership is required to produce a high level five year strategy by June. It has not yet been announced how this will impact on services at St Helier but it has been confirmed by the CCG that the hospital's £219m redevelopment agreed in March 2010 is no longer part of the Trust's proposed Long Term Financial Model, and that the banner stating that this redevelopment was "coming soon" has consequently been taken down.

10. From Councillor Suzanne Evans to the Cabinet Member for Health

Since its first meeting in shadow form to the last meeting held to date, how many pages in total have the combined full Agendas for the Health and Wellbeing Board, together with attachments, reports, appendices, etc. run to? Please also break down the information by number of pages per meeting.

Reply

Shadow HWBB

Date	No. of Pages
14-Jun-11	81
09-Aug-11	124
25-Oct-11	42
13-Dec-11	62
14-Feb-12	75
10-Apr-12	114
29-May-12	89
10-Jul-12	63
11-Sep-12	117
13-Nov-12	169
05-Feb-12	233

Health and Wellbeing Board

Date	No. of Pages
23-Apr-13	139
04-Jun-13	95
01-Oct-13	155
28-Jan-14	454
25-Mar-14	390

TOTAL **2321**

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AMENDMENT TO MOTION AGENDA ITEM 9 COUNCIL MEETING 2 APRIL 2014

Councillor Miles Windsor will move and Councillor Ray Tindle will second that the words underlined in the amended Motion below be inserted

Agenda Item 9 – Notices of Motion

Motion on Sustainable Living

This Council notes that:

One planet living is a vision of a sustainable world in which people everywhere can enjoy a high quality of life within the productive capacity of the planet.

If everyone in the world lived as we do in the UK we would need three planets to support us.

We need to reduce our impact - our Ecological Footprint - by two thirds to a sustainable and globally fair level.

This Council recognises that:

A local eco-organisation BioRegional has developed, with WWF, a One Planet Living framework to help individuals and organisations live and work within a fair share of our planet's resources.

This framework identifies ten guiding principles covering:

- Zero carbon
- Zero waste
- Sustainable transport
- Sustainable materials
- Local and sustainable food
- Sustainable water
- Land use and wildlife
- Culture and heritage
- Equity and local economy
- Health and happiness

This Council recommends that:

We adopt the principle of One Planet Living in Merton

We invite BioRegional to work with us to develop a One Planet Merton framework to complement the recommendations from the 2013-14 Scrutiny Task Group Review on Climate Change and the Green Deal, which will be considered by Cabinet in June

We monitor the work of the Council against those principles and recommendations through the Scrutiny process

We work with residents, our partners, the business community, and the voluntary and community sector to enable the principles to be rolled out across the borough as part of the updated Climate Change Strategy for 2014-17 due to be adopted later this year

This Council requests that:

The Cabinet investigate this opportunity in conjunction with the recommendations from the Scrutiny Task Group Review on Climate Change and the Green Deal and report back to full Council by the end of 2014 on what progress it has made towards One Planet Living in Merton and annually thereafter.

The amended Motion would then read:

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