

Motion 1 (Conservative)

Submitted by Councillors Diane Neil Mills, Suzanne Grocott and Henry Nelles

This Council recognises that for too long vital local assets such as car parks, pubs and libraries have been lost without proper consideration being given to the effect on the community in Merton.

Recent efforts by residents to try and save Wimbledon Library, the P4 car park and Morden Tavern by having them listed as 'assets of community value' under the provisions of the 2011 Localism Act clearly demonstrate the willingness and determination of local people to protect the borough's assets for the benefit of future generations. However time and again, residents and community groups have come up against council bureaucracy and a lack of transparency with regard to management of the council's assets.

This Council believes that Merton should seek to help not hinder residents and community groups in their efforts and as such it would be beneficial to have a comprehensive list of assets around the borough which local people would like to see protected. This Council also believes that any proposals brought forward by the Cabinet to acquire or dispose of assets should as far as possible be consistent with the budget adopted annually by Full Council so as to ensure greater transparency of decision making and improve the long term management of the council's assets.

This Council therefore resolves:

- a) Actively to encourage and support Merton's residents, businesses and community groups to come forward with proposals for local sites to be included on a list of Merton's 'assets of community value'.
- b) To request Cabinet to replace the current Strategic Property Asset Group, which is made up only of council officers, with a new cross party body consisting of a mixture of Members and officers who are tasked with considering these proposed sites.
- c) As part of a move towards greater openness and transparency and improved forward planning, that any acquisitions and disposals of council assets proposed by Cabinet, which are not already clearly stated in the budget approved in March each year, should be brought to Full Council for decision by all Members and that a report be presented to General Purposes Committee to consider the implications and amendments required to the constitution to give effect to this change