

1. From Mark Gale

To the Cabinet Member for Finance

Why does Merton Council allow and even promote illegal fly posters in particular Circus & Fairs? For example the recent Mitcham Status Fair which last year was more flytipping of posters than flyposting but again this year they flypost Council branded posters on phone boxes, empty shop fronts, charity collection boxes.

Reply: TO BE ANSWERED BY THE CABINET MEMBER FOR STREET CLEANLINESS AND PARKING

Merton Council does not allow or promote illegal fly posting within the borough. Whenever possible the council will take action against fly posting using the “Unauthorized display of advertisements (flyposting) Contrary to Section 224(3) Town and Country planning Act 1990 I Section 43(1) Antisocial Behaviour Act 2003’.

We are currently undertaking investigations with respect to the Mitcham Status Fair whose poster campaign was not carried out with council approval.

Supplementary

Why can't you address the problem? You allow these known fly posts every year, every month. Is this allowed, as I'd like to advertise my business across the borough?

Reply

I apologise for the experience you've had with fly posting. It isn't council policy to allow it and the Mitcham Status Fair that we're discussing, we are investigating the fly posting they've done this year. If you see fly posting, please let me know and we will continue to investigate and prosecute.

2. From N R Davis

To the Cabinet Member for Finance

Please will the Council advise what budget is allocated for administrative staff training? Further, will they advise Borough residents and taxpayers, what level of responsibility is expected from Director employees, with regard to monitoring junior staffs' written and oral communication?

Reply

The Council has centralised its budget for learning and development (with the exception of social workers which is held in Children Schools and Families). The budget is allocated based on individual needs identified through appraisals and one to ones; service development, organisational development and development as a result of the Target Operating Models of each the departments.

The Council has standards in relation to communication that all staff need to adhere to.

Directors and managers will sign off some letters, however templates are available to ensure there is consistency and structure to letters sent out to the residents and customers.

3. From Sandra Vogel

To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Environment and Housing

When will Merton Council fulfil the commitment made by the Head of futureMerton to replace the chalk stick bollards installed on Cricket Green in June 2015 as a "temporary measure" with more sensitive measures suitable for the Conservation Area?

Reply

The chalk-stick bollards in Mitcham Cricket Green were a measure installed quickly to deter travellers. Whilst we agree that a more sensitive long-term solution, such as timber bollards, would be better, aesthetically, for the Conservation Area, implementation is dependent on funding and prioritisation within the Council's highway programme. It was anticipated that resources could have come from a Townscape Heritage Lottery bid which was unsuccessful, or from planning contributions from developments in the area. However such schemes have yet to commence development. At present there is no available resource in the current programme.

4. From Tony Burton

To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Environment and Housing

Will Merton Council publish the pre-application advice it provides to applicants as part of the information on planning applications provided on Planning Explorer as a matter of routine or will it continue to require this information to be obtained only by separate Freedom of Information requests?

Reply

The Council is currently considering its position on planning application information that it has previously treated as confidential and a report is currently being drafted for consideration. Developers often request that pre- application information is not released for financial confidentiality reasons, however, the council recognises that there can be public interest at that early stage. The public's views are only sought through consultation at the formal application stage when the decision is ultimately made. It is also relevant that there is a significant amount of pre-application requests that amount to nothing, as developers are often seeking advice prior to considering the potential purchase of a site. The pre-application process is not part of the formal application process so for the time being such information may only be released under a freedom of information request.

5. From John Davis

To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Environment and Housing

Following life-threatening damage to tree roots at Three Kings Piece Mitcham when grass was tarmacked, will Merton Council

- a) publish its policy on tree root protection for highway schemes and planning applications,
- b) explain how a) was implemented in this particular case,
- c) detail actions taken against policy breaches?

Reply

The reported damage to the tree at Three Kings Piece is evident from 2014 and does not appear to be related to the recent footpath / bus stop accessibility works.

- a) The Council's policies relate to planning applications and development proposals this does not apply to works undertaken under the Highways Act but the Council as landowner does undertake consultation between teams and public notices where appropriate.
- b) The root protection zone for the tree at Three Kings Piece included a substantial amount of the existing highway, for which the tree has survived. It was considered that the footpath, with its shallow sub-base, would not be detrimental to the root structure considering the presence of the existing road in the same zone, the Council will monitor the situation.
- c) Enforcement of tree legislation is undertaken in relation to the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 as per a) not relevant to highway matters.

6. From Andrew Morgan

To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Environment and Housing

Does Merton Council have any plans to tarmac or build or otherwise remove grass on any of the registered town greens or other green spaces in Mitcham Cricket Green Conservation Area, following the tarmacking without public consultation of Three Kings Piece and Cranmer Green?

Reply

No, there are no further works planned for the area.

7. From Joan Keddie

To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Environment and Housing

Which, if any, of the registered town greens in the Borough are controlled by a scheme of registration made under either the Metropolitan Commons Act 1886-1898, or the Commons Act 1899? Will Merton Council publish the scheme?

Reply

The Registers and Maps of Common Land and Town/Village Green (showing registered land) are public registers under the Commons Registration Act 1965 and are available for inspection free of charge via the Local Land Charges section – a list is provided below. You asked if these are controlled by a scheme of registration made under either the Metropolitan Commons Act 1886-1898 and probably meant

the 'scheme of regulation'. The borough does not hold this information; the management and maintenance of these spaces are covered by the Council's overall greenspaces management and maintenance regime.

The following are registered as Town or Village Greens within Merton:

VG4 – Three King's Piece
VG5 – Canons Piece
VG6 – Figges Marsh
VG7 – Upper Green
VG8 – Lower and Cricket Green

8. From Maryrose Greenhough

To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Environment and Housing

Please would the Council act to prevent a road traffic accident by installing traffic calming measures and pavement barrier on Wellington Road, thereby reducing the speed of commercial vehicles associated with Wellington Works industrial estate which pose a daily threat to hundreds of children using the school, nursery and park?

Reply

The council receives a number of requests for traffic calming measures and we have to assess and prioritise schemes based on existing safety data. As part of our safety programme we do pay especial attention to areas outside of schools. We will add Wellington Road to our programme for an initial investigation. Local ward Members will be contacted as soon as the issue has been assessed.

Supplementary

Why does Wellington Road have absolutely no traffic calming measures, or safety measures whatsoever, and yet the Priory Primary School has every traffic calming measure available, e.g. barriers, 20 mph speed limit, road signs, speed bumps, digital speed readers and they don't have a commercial industrial estate at the end of the road?

Reply

In terms of street management we get a number of requests across the borough, especially outside schools and I do take these things extremely seriously. The Council has embarked on a number of traffic calming schemes outside schools. We will take away the question and look at this further and respond further on addressing the issue. Please rest assured we take this seriously but do get a number of requests across Merton.

9. From Sara Sharp

To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Environment and Housing

Can the Council please explain why its planning committee set a dangerous precedent in choosing to ignore the views of over 100 residents and associations, and the organisation charged with business improvement – Love Wimbledon – by

recently approving the metal clad design of the Premier Inn development on Wimbledon Broadway?

Reply

The application was approved by the Planning Committee following consultation and a redesign to reduce the amount of the proposed metal cladding. All of the material considerations were considered by members of the committee and contained within the report including responses from residents. It is not possible to provide individual members' views on why they voted the way they did on the matter, as it is a collective vote when the decision is made

Supplementary

My question is about the Premier Inn. I would like to ask the Cabinet Member why the Development Control Team didn't take up the developer's suggestion or proposal to put brick on the side, fully on the side, as requested by the more than 100 residents and resident associations who objected to the application.

Reply

Planning Officers have to consider a wide range of different issues and consider each application on its merits. I understand Ms Sharp has already been given a response on these issues in relation to brickwork. The Planning Committee must consider all issues and come to a decision. I am happy they did, and I respect the work they undertake in the borough and they must make decisions in line with the Planning Framework.

10. From Dan Goode

To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Environment and Housing

What progress has been made in preparing the long term strategy for keeping Mitcham clean and tidy, promised by Mike Brunt as part of his election campaign earlier this year?

Reply: TO BE ANSWERED BY THE CABINET MEMBER FOR REGENERATION AND STREET CLEANLINESS

The council has developed an integrated approach to tackling litter that encompasses cleansing operations, enforcement and education. The street cleaning team work closely with our in house enforcement team to deal with fly tipping and littering. Evidence for fly tips is gathered and passed through to the Enforcement team for further action. So far this year our in-house enforcement team has issued 162 FPNs for small fly tips using the littering regulations. This is double the amount of FPNs issued throughout the whole of last year. Over 100 fixed penalty notices having been issued over the last four months in the Mitcham area.

We have increased the frequency of visits by our enforcement contractor Kingdom to deal with littering in the town centre. This is being supported by a greater educational presence from our Engagement team. Our in house enforcement officers carry out regular monitoring of the area to ensure that Commercial businesses are complying

with legislation and have collection contracts in place as well as dealing with abandoned vehicles.

Residents are regularly reminded of the Council's bulky waste service through leafleting in areas where there is a high turnover.

There has been increased collaborative working with Circle Homes in relation to enforcement dealing with fly tipping activity on their estates.

I would like to thank newly elected Councillor for Figges Marsh ward, Cllr Mike Brunt, for already taking a key role in these matters. Cllr Brunt sat on the Scrutiny committee which undertook pre-decision scrutiny of the proposed new contract and he subsequently sat on the "call-in" that agreed to take this process to the next stage. I am confident this new long term strategy will result in a cleaner Merton that remains affordable to local council tax payers and I would like to thank all Councillors for the involvement to date.

**11. From Jacqueline Robinson
To the Cabinet Member for Education**

Why is a Harris free school replacing the day care centre for disabled people and taking Abbey Primary school's playing field for themselves? Likewise, why is High Path Estate targeted for a high crime rate though average?

Reply: TO BE ANSWERED BY THE DEPUTY LEADER

In early 2015 the Secretary of State for Education gave 'pre-opening' approval to the Harris Federation for the establishment of a new secondary school in the Wimbledon area. Although not the decision maker on the matter, the council recognised that there is a 'basic need' for secondary places in the borough, including in the Wimbledon area where we expect significant increased demand for secondary school places.

While the administration does not support the government's free school policy, we recognise that the government has a mandate to decide on these issues, and we have focused on ensuring that the provider is suitable for the borough, and that any new school is located in an area of the borough where there is demand for school places that cannot be satisfied in other ways, and will not lead to a harmful impact on other schools. The council has, therefore, been supporting the Department for Education (and its agency the EFA) to find a suitable site for the new school, while, separately, commissioning work to expand at least one existing secondary school in the east of the borough.

The council and EFA have undertaken extensive site searches for the new school and a preferred site has been identified. This includes a number of separate plots, including plots that would need to be purchased from owners not in the public sector. Because negotiations with those third parties have not yet been completed, the council is not in a position to confirm details of the site because of the need for commercial confidentiality. This response provides as much detail as is considered prudent at this stage, therefore, although the council intends to provide fuller detail as soon as possible.

In terms of the approach we would take if a site required by the EFA included an existing council facility, our starting point would be that the existing facility should be fully re-provided on an alternative local site and continue to provide the range of services as is currently the case. The council has given a commitment to fully involve current service users and carers in any re-provision exercise.

In respect of Merton Abbey we would like to offer reassurance that there is no proposal for Harris Wimbledon to 'take over the field'. The council has approached the governors of Merton Abbey Primary School regarding whether there could be an agreement for part of the grassed area of the school playing field to be converted to a good quality synthetic surface and used by Harris Wimbledon at set times of the school day, with the details to be negotiated. We are also looking more widely at off-site playing field use for the pupils at Harris Wimbledon School, as has frequently happened elsewhere when new schools have been built in London.

Merton Abbey's school governors have raised some concerns regarding the proposal and council school organisation and school improvement officers are working with the school to work through both the challenges and potential benefits that will arise should a school provider with a good reputation for improving educational outcomes such as the Harris Federation (which already has two high schools in Merton, both of which have just reported record exam results) open a new school in the heart of our borough.

Supplementary

Why is High Path estate targeted as having a high crime rate, although average, which is given as a reason for regeneration?

Reply

The question that we had originally been asked was regarding the high school on the High Path estate. I know that residents have expressed concerns about crime and antisocial behaviour, and one of the advantages of having a really good school in the area is to educate people and ensure good discipline to improve the quality of life of residents in that area. The third question was about the wider regeneration and not really within my remit. The Council will be working with Affinity and Circle to ensure that any regeneration will be right for the area, offers people a better environment for their families to live, enjoy and grow up. We have to make a determination on planning matters.

12. From Nicole Mckenzie

To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Environment and Housing

Why are Merton Council not looking after the high street and allowing one type of service to dominate it (i.e. multiple solicitors with garish signage)? Especially as these services are not benefiting the local residents.

Reply

The council has made significant investments in high streets across the borough. Examples include the refurbishment of Leopold Road that the council secured as part of a planning legal agreement; providing shopfront improvement grants to support shopkeepers and other small businesses in making their premises – and thereby their street - more attractive; working with the Mayor of London's team on the recent revitalisation of the street scene and public realms in Mitcham and Colliers Wood, and the forthcoming investment in more than 35 shops and businesses in London Road, Morden, which will restore an Art Deco shopping parade to its former glory.

The council's planning policies encourage a mix of shops, restaurants, cafes and other services in all of our town centres and major high streets where this is allowed by the planning system. For example, one of our planning policies prevents too many new hot food takeaways opening up on high streets where there are already several takeaways to choose from because of the harm that could be caused to public health. However these shops and other buildings are privately owned and, like people's homes, it is the decision of whoever owns the building as to which brand of supermarket or brand of coffee shop or solicitor will rent a particular shop; it is not controlled by the planning system. We would encourage local residents to support the shops and services that they like to see on their high street by shopping local, thereby allowing these businesses to thrive and compete for space.

13. From Laura Hepburn Murray To the Cabinet Member for Education

Why have Merton Council not consulted all Wimbledon residents about the proposed high school on the High Path Estate? Discussions are to take land from a primary school, demolish a recreation centre, and church – whilst being significantly smaller than recommended guidelines, coupled with a greater need in the Mitcham area?

Reply: TO BE ANSWERED BY THE DEPUTY LEADER

Please see the response to q 11. Additionally:

In respect of consultation referenced in the above question, the decision to open a new school has already been taken by the government, after appropriate consultation. The issue of the borough's requirement for a new school has been widely debated for a number of years, and there have been many opportunities to make comments. However, the need for commercial confidentiality has inevitably restricted the amount of consultation specifically about the site. Limited consultation with key stakeholders has been undertaken to date, but fuller consultation will be undertaken in due course.

The Harris Federation has already carried out consultation in advance of submitting their application to the government for a new school, and will undertake statutory consultation in respect to the proposed opening of the school, not possible to date in the absence of a named site. There will also be statutory consultation during the planning application process. These consultation processes will enable local residents to put forward their views. As noted above, users of the day centre and

their carers will be fully consulted on its re-provision. The council has no plans to consult 'all Wimbledon residents' over and above the consultations noted above.

In respect of the proposed new school being 'significantly smaller than recommended guidelines', a high level feasibility study has confirmed that all the internal spaces that any new school is entitled to under government design guidance can fit on the site. However, there is a challenge with regard to outside space.

Many schools in urban areas cannot meet the DfE guidance for external space hence we are working with the governors of Merton Abbey Primary School (see question 11 above) and looking at playing fields in close proximity to the new school. It should further be noted that there are many schools rated 'good' or 'outstanding' which operate successfully on constrained sites, including schools already operated by the Harris Federation, and the EFA, who are ultimately responsible for this matter, are satisfied that a good education can be provided to children. Given the high quality of the Harris Federation as a provider, and our faith in the abilities of the governors at Merton Abbey, the administration agrees.

With regard to the location, the proposed site is in the ideal general location for a new school, being accessible to Wimbledon, Colliers Wood and to the north of Mitcham. It is essential to have additional places to serve Wimbledon residents as there is no expansion of existing secondary schools in this area, where there has been the highest need to expand our primary schools to meet demand.

14. From Jane Lewis To the Cabinet Member for Education

Some Rutlish students have a long standing reputation within the local community of persistent antisocial behaviour. Please comment on how the closure of the John Innes Park pathway will affect already strained relationships between Rutlish School and the community of which it is a part?

Reply

Rutlish is a popular school rated as Good by Ofsted and it continues to deliver good results at GCSE and A level as well as providing well for young people's well being and development as young citizens. The council would challenge the allegation of persistent antisocial behaviour by Rutlish students.

With regard to the impact of the closure of the John Innes pathway, given that the council intends to replace the existing path, we cannot see any potential greater negative impact from Rutlish students around John Innes Park and Rec. In fact, the closure of the gates during extended school hours, as well as protecting the school from potential intruders, will help to ensure students remain on the school site.

Supplementary

I would like the council to further comment on the position of the leadership at Rutlish School and their ability to promote a pivotal and positive role, with regard to the closure of the pathway.

Reply

We have confidence in the leadership at the school. For the safety of the children, the best thing to do is close the path while the school is in session.

15. From Penny Walton To the Cabinet Member for Education

What measures has the school put in place previously to secure the two sites separately and why have these not been effective? Other schools that are located across multiple sites are able to implement satisfactory measures, why has this not been possible at Rutlish School?

Reply

The position is relatively unique for Rutlish School in that to operate the school it is unavoidable for the majority of its 1,300 students to regularly pass through the path at all lesson changeovers and lunchtimes, with the main playground and dining hall being on opposite sides of the path.

Other 'split school schools' we found in our research only had some accommodation on another site and therefore it was possible for students to move across the sites at set times in a safe, organised way.

The only effective measure other than to close the path is to improve the CCTV, which only provides a measure of additional security and has already been undertaken, or to employ full time security staff at the path gates. However, this would involve the cost of employing at least two staff throughout the school day, and would still not guarantee safety as it would remain difficult to ensure no unauthorised person 'slipping through' at times when several hundred students pass over the path at lesson changeover.

Supplementary

I am still not clear what measures have already been put in place before this step was taken. Why were obvious and inexpensive measures not taken, e.g. signage on the path to indicate no access via the path, and why do the school gates frequently stand open and unattended when not in use between lessons. Can you explain that?

Reply

We are still working on signs. I'm sure there will be something there soon. There was a full consultation on the closure of the footpath. We have to move forward.

16. From Julie White To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Environment and Housing

Affinity Sutton is shortly taking over CHMP. What due diligence has Council carried out to ensure that the governance of CHMP will honour High Path's Residents Offer and the '91 Promises' and is Council permitting CHMP's planning application to be purposely delayed so this transaction can be completed?

Reply

Ever since stock transfer took place, the council has met with CHMP on a quarterly basis to review progress against the promises made at the time of transfer. These meetings have involved senior officers and the Cabinet member. There are also regular reports by CHMP to the relevant scrutiny panel.

The council is in discussion with CHMP and the Circle group more widely about their proposed changes to governance arrangements. These discussions are seeking to maximise local accountability and decision making within any new arrangements.

The council's understanding is that that CHMP's planning application stands whatever the governance arrangements are within CHMP/Circle/Affinity Sutton at the time.

17. From Anthony Fairclough To the Cabinet Member for Education

What measures will be put in place to ensure that the construction of the new Harris Academy Wimbledon school doesn't significantly impact the pupils and staff at Merton Abbey Primary, further to Merton's letter to parents on 16.08?

Reply

Please see the response to q11 from my colleague Councillor Allison who is the lead Cabinet member on assets. In relation to the issues you raise under my portfolio:

Subject to the proposed scheme going ahead, the construction of the new school will be project managed by EFA staff. During the construction phase, it would be common project management practice to ensure that risks and other disruption to neighbouring accommodation, in this case Merton Abbey Primary School and the local community, would be carefully managed through close liaison with all stakeholders. As well as careful management of the challenges we would hope that the primary pupils could benefit through cross curricular projects as a number of our expanded primary schools have done in recent years.

18. From Carl Quilliam To the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health

What impact assessment has been done for the users of the High Path Community Centre for the moving of the centre and its services to a new site?

Reply

The social care staff involved with High Path know the people who use the service very well and many have experience of supporting people through other moves when centres have closed or been re-furnished. We are therefore in a good position to understand the potential impact of a move to another site. Other staff from across the service and from the Learning Disabilities team will be available to support the service users if needed.

19. From Vincent Bolt

To the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health

Will the council take into account views of residents or the outcome of any impact assessment when making a final decision on the future of the High Path Community Centre?

Reply

In coming to a view on the school site the Council and its partners, the government's Education Funding Agency (EFA) and Harris, have taken into consideration a range of factors including the need to ensure all our young people have access to a school place at a good local school and the impact on current users of High Path. Due to the nature of the process which includes sensitive commercial negotiations, it was not feasible to undertake full consultation in advance of site purchase agreements being finalised but users will be fully involved in consultation on how services at the new centre will look.

20. From Emily Robertson

To the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health

What measures are the council putting in place to support users of the High Path Community Centre who may now have to travel further to the centre?

Reply

Most people who attend High Path are taken to and from the Centre by our transport services, and these arrangements will continue once the new centre opens. There are a handful of people who currently make their own way to High Path, and they will be supported to learn the route to the new centre, or be offered transport if they prefer.

21. From Ian Veacock

To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Environment and Housing

For ex-council estates proposed for regeneration, how will the council ensure demolition is not permitted unless a replacement property has at least the same usable space as the existing residence? (Floor to ceiling height, wall & door total running length including outbuildings, roofspace, gardens, garages, used for their present purpose).

Reply

Should regeneration of estates go ahead, demolition would not be permitted without a planning consent for new replacement homes. The design detail and standards for new homes would be in line with current design policies established in Merton's Local Plan and the London Plan, in particular, the Mayor's Housing Supplementary Planning Document.

22. From Rachel Waitt

To the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health

What measures will the council put in place to support users of the High Path Community Centre during the transition period?

Reply

Staff will support users who, along with carers and other stakeholders, will be involved in designing the new service. Day service staff have experience in moving centres and will if needed call on support from the Learning Disability Team which comprises Social Workers and health professionals. We will ensure that service users are reassured that the move will involve their friends and staff so that consistency is maintained.

Supplementary

My question concerns the closure of High Path Day Centre and plans to support the users in this change. Are there plans to use the social care mitigation fund for this, or is there budget provision in place?

Reply

The mitigation fund was put in place to mitigate savings marked against this year's budget and their potential deliverability. No funds have been drawn down yet. We will be assessing it in the next few years to see if there is a need to take money from the fund for this purpose.

23. From Philip Ling

To the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health

Will there be any further investment in the services at the High Path Community Centre as compensation for the move?

Reply

We have no plans to increase or decrease the level of support or activities provided at the centre purely as a result of the move.

24. From Cypren Edmunds

To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Environment and Housing

Confusion is rife among residents of Merton as to the allocation of homes to the homeless. Please outline the procedure between Council and CHMP as we have a number of properties which have been vacant for many months and at a time when we are supposedly in a housing crisis.

Reply

The Council works in partnership with CHMP and other registered providers to meet housing need, the most acute form of which is homelessness. The Council receives a % of nomination rights to vacant registered provider homes. For CHMP and in

accordance with the stock transfer agreement the Council has nomination rights to 100% of true voids.

The Council nominates to these properties in accordance with its published Housing Register and Nominations which can be found at <http://www.merton.gov.uk/housing/housingpolicy/housing-register-nominations-policy.htm>

The average time it takes the Council to nominate to a registered provider is 4.9 days.

The author of this question may be referring to properties that are being purchased by CMP in accordance with their “Buy Back” arrangements. The Council and CHMP are committed in increasing housing options for Merton residents and have agreed a process for the Council to nominate to the dwelling purchased by CHMP under the Buy Back arrangements. This is a completely separate arrangement to the legal stock transfer agreement and sits outside any legal relationship with CHMP.

These properties are relet on Assured Shorthold Tenancies and assists the Council in meeting its statutory housing functions and importantly brings to an end homeless episodes for many vulnerable households who need suitable and affordable accommodation. To date 18 properties have been offered for nomination of which 16 have been relet. CHMP have advised that there are additional “Buy Back” properties to be provided, but have assured officers that there are no general needs voids being withheld (to which the Council has an agreed nomination right).

**25. From Hafsa Chowdhury
To the Cabinet Member for Education**

Is it wise for the Council and Harris Academy to consider planning and building a High School on a site in Merantun Way, South Wimbledon, which potentially sits across from a probation office that deals with youth and adult offenders, some of whom who could be repeat or sex offenders?

Reply

Please see the response to q11 from my colleague Cllr Allison who is the lead Cabinet Member on assets. Additionally:

Council officers, the government’s Education Funding Agency and the Harris Federation have no specific concerns as noted in this question. The questioner will be aware that an existing school and daycare provision for adults have already been operating safely in the area for many years and there is no reason to suggest that the establishment of a new school will introduce any additional risks to children or vulnerable adults. The new school will, as a matter of course, have safeguarding children procedures in place before it begins operation.

26. From Andrew Boyce
To the Cabinet Member for Education

Assuming the Council will actually consult local residents, will it press ahead with its plans to build a new high school on High Path in South Wimbledon if the outcome of that consultation is that a majority of local residents are not in favour of such a proposal?

Reply

Please see the response to q11 and q13. Additionally:

The government's Education Funding Agency (EFA) has already decided that a new Free School will be established in the Wimbledon area. The provider of the new school will consult as is required by statute, as will the council during the statutory planning process. There will not be a local referendum on the issue, as the free school policy is a government policy, and while this administration does not support that policy, the government has a mandate to deliver their policies within the law.

27. From Christopher Holt
To the Cabinet Member for Finance

Can Merton Council confirm that their Property Management and Review Manager is in charge of reviewing Asset of Community Value applications and also involved in sale of land to potential developers for regeneration and similar? Does this represent a potential conflict of interests?

Reply

The Property Management and Review Manager is responsible for the marketing of property owned by the Council and in making recommendations regarding the terms of the individual sales.

For applications to the Council to list property assets as being of Community Value Cabinet decided on 10 December 2012 that Property Management and Review (Environment and Regeneration Department) manage the applications for listing and claims for compensation.

In addition Cabinet agreed:

1. That for property that is nominated which is not in Council ownership the decision on whether a nominated property is included on the list of community assets is delegated to the Chair of the Strategic Property Asset Group (the Property Management and Review Manager) in consultation with that group and the relevant Cabinet Member and Members.
2. That for property that is nominated which is in Council ownership the decision on whether a nominated property is included on the list of community assets is delegated to the Chair of the Capital Programme Board (the Director of Corporate Services) in consultation with that group and the relevant Cabinet Member and Members.

The Property Management and Review Manager is responsible for managing applications and the decision making process (subject to consultation) to list a property as an asset of community value for properties not within the council's ownership . Applications for council owned properties are decided by the Director of Corporate Services (subject to consultation). The separation removes any potential conflict of interest on the part of the Property Management and Review Manager.

28. From Simon McGrath

To the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health

In the event that the High Path Community Centre is moved, does the council commit to fully retain all aspects of the existing service at the centre?

Reply

As with all services that the council provides, the Council needs to regularly review all of its services but there are no plans to change the services provided from the centre as a result of the move.

Supplementary

If there is a need to reduce the services, at what point will consultation on that start?

Reply

We're not looking to reduce services, we're looking to replace on a like for like basis. We do intend to ensure that users and carers are fully involved in the process. What we can't do at the moment is talk about the location of the new centre as it's subject to commercial discussions but we intend to involve users and carers in the discussions and I'll be working with Cabinet and Ward Members to ensure that involvement.

29. From Omer Ali

To the Cabinet Member for Education

Does the Council realise that building a high school in Merantun Way opposite potential new homes on High Path belonging to older generation tenants and leaseholders (who seek peace and quiet) is now likely to have a detrimental effect on people's decisions to live there or even want regeneration?

Reply: TO BE ANSWERED BY THE DEPUTY LEADER

Please see the response to q11. Additionally:

The council considers that the proposed site for the new school is the best possible option available to the government's Education Funding Authority who are responsible for finding sites for new schools. We are mindful of the interests of local residents including both prospective pupils of the new school and their parents but also those of residents including the 'older generation'. Officers will work with the EFA and Harris Federation to minimise any negative impact the proposed new

school could have on the local community but we also recognise this is a great opportunity for an excellent new school to bring significant benefits for the local community, local children and their parents.

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