

COUNCIL 11 SEPTEMBER 2013

## PUBLIC QUESTIONS

### **Procedure at the meeting:**

- 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 main chamber where you will present your supplementary question.
- 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 full text of your questions and answers will be detailed in the minutes of this evenings meeting.

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### **Questions:**

1. From Hayley Humphreys (not attending)

To Councillor Andrew Judge, Cabinet Member for Environment and Regeneration.

Question

“What is happening with the old Mitcham McDonalds site?”

Reply

The site is privately owned and is currently being marketed by the owners. The Council have made several attempts to contact the owners to determine the future prospects and to offer support, but so far this has been unsuccessful.

2. From Neil Malcolm (in attendance)

Question

“Why has Merton Council breached the guidelines laid out by the Charity Commission in its management of Tamworth Recreation Ground and Allotments and why are three-quarters of Councillors unaware of their responsibilities as Trustees of that organisation, defined both by Charity Law and the Governing Document of the Charity?”

Reply

We do not believe we have breached the guidelines of the Charity Commission, however Council Officers are investigating specific issues relating to the management of the Tamworth Recreation Ground and Allotments which have been raised by Mr Malcolm. Once these matters have been investigated Mr Malcolm will receive a full written response.

The individual councillors are not themselves trustees of the organisation; the London Borough of Merton is the sole trustee and day to day management of the trust is undertaken by council officers. Any decision making on behalf of the Trust would be in accordance with the Council's decision making processes.

Supplementary

Will Merton Council form an independent board of management to administer Tamworth Recreation Ground and Allotments in accordance with sound financial principles, respecting the covenant and in compliance with charity law? Representatives from the community, including our residents' association, Tamworth Farm Allotments Society, Sustainable Merton and the Friends of North Mitcham Park would, I am sure, be happy to sit alongside council officers on such a committee. Written quarterly reports would be submitted to this meeting.

Reply

I would suggest to Mr Malcolm the current governance arrangements for this site are pretty good. What we've got is an excellent children's centre, a refurbished children's area, a paddling pool, sports facilities and it is very popular in summer. I think that shows that the way Merton Council has governed the recreation ground in the last few years is to a high standard. There is, I should say, a North Mitcham Parks Friends and Heritage Group, and if Mr Malcolm wished to join that, I think he would find a very receptive group of people who are already dedicated, as Friends, to looking after parks in the area.

3. From Gregory Capper (not attending)

To Councillor Andrew Judge, Cabinet Member for Environment and Regeneration.

“Surely the volume of fast, heavy traffic on Worple Road is a safety concern, i.e. during the school ‘rush’, there are a lot of pupils on pavements, crossing the road. If access for Emergency vehicles means traffic calming cannot be installed, other action is required to slow traffic (speed cameras)?”

Reply

Worple Road is a Principal Emergency Route, Local Distributor Road and a bus route. Given the status of this road it is not possible to introduce the most effective speed reducing feature which is a road hump. One possible physical feature that could be installed is speed cushions. However in areas where these features have been introduced the council routinely receives complaints regarding noise and vibration associated with these features; and there have also been an increase in insurance claims regarding damage to properties.

Because of vehicles’ ability to straddle these features, vehicles are often uncompelled to reduce speed of travel. The introduction of such features would be subject to an informal and statutory consultation. Such proposals are often met with strong objections from residents because of the associated noise and vibration and fear of damage to property. In this case any such proposal will most definitely receive strong objections from the bus operators and emergency services and the council is unlikely to be able to overrule such objections.

The council does take safety very seriously and as part of our annual local safety programme we monitor all personal injury accidents across the borough. However, in many cases an engineering solution cannot be applied as many accidents are due to driver error.

Due to limited available resource and funding and the high level of demand for similar approaches, it has become essential to prioritise by giving first consideration to those areas with recorded personal injury accidents. According to personal injury collision records over the past three years there have not been any speed related personal injury accidents along Worple Road; it would, therefore, be difficult justifying any action/expenditure at this time. In an ideal world the council would prefer to deal with all possible schemes to reduce danger simultaneously, but due to tight budgets it is essential to utilise the evidence on accidents to prioritise action.

With regards to speed camera there are a number of criteria that must be met. These include:

- There must be at least four fatal and serious collisions per km in the recent period
- There must be eight personal injury collisions per km in last three years
- Collisions causation factors must be speed related

- Collisions are clustered close together around a single stretch of road or junction

Worple Road does not meet any of these criteria and therefore speed cameras cannot be considered.

4. From Sandra Vogel (advice re attendance awaited)

To Councillor Andrew Judge, Cabinet Member for Environment and Regeneration.

“What will be the impact on (a) traffic levels and (b) congestion in Mitcham town centre from the proposals to (a) route buses around the one way system and through a new bus street across Fair Green and (b) create a new contra-flow bus lane in London Road and a new bus street across Fair Green?”

Reply

A range of proposals to facilitate bus movements into and out of the Fair Green are currently undergoing detailed analysis. This analysis is twofold.

Firstly a ‘macro simulation’ modelling approach known as Transyt is being used to assess network effects through considering the changes to junction capacity. This analysis suggests that the contra-flow bus lane will not have any significant effect on congestion in the town centre. This is measured through considering the saturation of each junction impacted and in each case the degree of saturation either remains stable or has a nominal increase. This outcome can be explained by a number of reasons including the ‘gating’ effect of junctions outside the town centre (e.g. Figges Marsh) which hold back traffic, as well as the potential to better calibrate the signals to operate more efficiently. Although intuitively it may be considered that a smaller junction for traffic means more congestion, there are also benefits to traffic such as shorter green time for pedestrians who have less distance to cross.

However a further level of analysis known as micro-simulation using VISSIM software is also being undertaken. This level of analysis is more focused on the actual operation of each junction in real world traffic conditions. This level of analysis is still underway and will be subject to audit by Transport for London. Because Mitcham is on the ‘Strategic Road Network’ any potential issues in junction operation with congestion impacts may result in changes to the scheme proposals. As soon as the outcome of this analysis is complete it will be made publically available.

5. From Tony Burton (not attending)

To Councillor Andrew Judge, Cabinet Member for Environment and Regeneration.

"What would be the net increase or decrease in (a) employment and

(b) economic activity in Mitcham town centre as a result of a new bus lane across Fair Green?"

Reply

The proposal for a bus street within the currently pedestrianised area of Fair Green, in conjunction with wider improvements to the accessibility of the area from surrounding streets as well as a significant upgrade of the public realm, is intended to support regeneration in Mitcham after many years of decline. The core proposal focuses on increasing footfall upon which retail vitality is based. It is estimated that between 5 and 6 thousand additional pedestrian journeys will be generated around the Fair Green every day as a result of the council's proposals. All assessments of retail growth potential focus primarily on footfall and therefore this boost to numbers is the essential 'trigger' factor in town centre regeneration.

Pedestrian trips will offer the greatest opportunity for increasing spend in local shops and market stalls. In conjunction to this the wider Outer London Fund One Mitcham related activities are seeking to create business capacity to exploit these opportunities. This includes business support and high impact events. The business community in Mitcham is strongly skewed toward small independent retailers.

There is no anticipated decrease in employment and economic activity in Mitcham town centre as a result of the scheme; the degree to which there are employment and economic activity benefits will depend on the extent to which existing and new businesses can exploit the increased footfall by developing appropriate and attractive products and services.

6. From Daniel Holden (in attendance)

To Councillor Andrew Judge, Cabinet Member for Environment and Regeneration.

"Can the cabinet member please explain what the criteria is for the non-collection of household recycling by the recycling waste operator. Also, to aid in recycling efforts would the council provide additional recycling boxes to residents if they asked?"

Reply

**THIS QUESTION WILL BE ANSWERED BY THE CABINET MEMBER FOR PERFORMANCE AND IMPLEMENTATION**

On the day of collection recycling boxes must be placed out by 6am at the front edge of properties where they can be easily seen, but not on the pavement. Only recycling materials listed as acceptable on the council's website should be placed in the boxes.

Residents may receive a card if there is an item in the box that we cannot recycle as part of the recycle from home service. If they receive a card, they should check the list of items accepted on our 'how to recycle from home' webpage. The recycling collectors have been given the cards to help residents use the recycling service. If we receive notification of a missed collection of recycling we will return to collect by the end of the following day.

Residents requiring additional boxes can make a request through the council's website.

#### Supplementary

I would like to challenge the point where he says residents may receive a card. Can he encourage that and make sure it is done all the time so residents know why their rubbish isn't being collected. Also on the point about additional boxes, I do believe this isn't happening, because I've requested it several times and it hasn't happened, so can this be actioned to encourage more recycling.

#### Reply

Of course I'll look into those two matters. With regards to the card for saying sorry when we don't do things, it's right to say sorry when we don't do things right. With regards to the two issues, we want to encourage more recycling, so I'll take that forward.

#### 7. From Barbara Mansfield (in attendance)

To Councillor Andrew Judge, Cabinet Member for Environment and Regeneration.

"How many units for shops and services facing Mitcham Fair Green are currently vacant?"

#### Reply

Two of the 23 units facing the Fair Green are vacant. However, one of these is the former MacDonald's site which has a significant percentage of floor space as a whole for the area. The majority of vacant units in Mitcham are located in the pedestrianised section of London Road – due to lack of footfall and visibility which many high street businesses rely on.

#### 8. From Robert Brinkley (advice re attendance awaited)

To Councillor Andrew Judge, Cabinet Member for Environment and Regeneration.

"Has the Committee, and have the Councillors, taken into consideration the financial viability of AFC Wimbledon (the "Club") actually paying for a football stadium to be built on the Plough Lane site (Site 37 - Wimbledon Greyhound

Stadium) through careful consideration of any costing or financial plans submitted by the Club, if any have indeed been submitted?"

Reply

At this stage, the council believes that there are a number of potentially viable proposals for the Wimbledon Greyhound Stadium site to deliver sporting intensification. However to date no specific planning application has been submitted by any party. The financial viability of any scheme for sporting intensification will be a key consideration in delivering development, especially at the planning application stage.

9. From Marco Baptista (not attending)

To Councillor Andrew Judge, Cabinet Member for Environment and Regeneration.

"Has the Committee, and have the Councillors, taken into account the effect on the local community of thousands of football fans descending on the Wimbledon Greyhound Stadium site if permission to build a football stadium was granted and the cost of policing matches?"

Reply

To date the council has not received a planning application from any party with regards to Wimbledon Greyhound Stadium. However, as part of the site's designation as a stadium for any sporting use, the council works closely with Transport for London, the Metropolitan Police, Wandsworth Council, the Mayor of London and other organisations to ensure that any site would be designed and operated to ensure safety and security for those taking part in sporting activities and local residents.

10. From Louise Howell (in attendance)

To Councillor Andrew Judge, Cabinet Member for Environment and Regeneration.

"Will Merton Council please support their constituents and maintain the Green Corridor status of the Rookwood Avenue 'wild land' hence preventing development of this land and also designate the route across this land (which has been continuously used for over 45 years) as a public right of way?"

Reply

The council is not only proposing the retention of the Green Corridor planning designation (to help support the migration of animals and plants) across the land at the end of Rookwood Avenue, West Barnes, but is also proposing to designate the land as open space as part of the Sites and Policies Plan and Policies Map. The council provides information on public rights of way on our

website [www.merton.gov.uk/publicrightsofway](http://www.merton.gov.uk/publicrightsofway) and we are happy to work with interested parties on new proposals for public rights of way

Supplementary

Will the Council therefore reject any planning applications for change of use of this land and keep it as a green corridor?

Reply

Any future applications that lie within the egis of this Council will be deal with by planning officers and the Planning Applications Committee in a quasi-judicial way. It's not something that we will seek to influence politically as an Administration or through this Council. We are committed to this being a green corridor and that there is policy there to support the retention of it being a green corridor in the event of any application coming forward.

11. From Melanie Nunzet (in attendance)

To Councillor Andrew Judge, Cabinet Member for Environment and Regeneration.

"To ask what is the total area of (a) soft and (b) hard surfaces for the part of Fair Green currently designated as Town Green before and after implementation of the Rediscover Mitcham proposals?"

Reply

The answers in respect of town green designations are:

Before (a) soft surface (grass) 3178m<sup>2</sup> (b) hard surface (pathways) 596m<sup>2</sup>  
 After (a) soft surface (grass) 3062m<sup>2</sup> (b) hard surface (pathways) 1396m<sup>2</sup>

The breakdown of these figures is provided by means of the table below. All figures are in square metres.

	Registered Green	Grass	Paths (paved)	Paths (gravel)	Cycle Path	Total Paths
Existing Fair Green						
East Side	1,251	950	301	0	0	301
West Side	2,523	2,228	295	0	0	295
TOTAL	3,774	3,178	596	0	0	596
Proposed Fair Green						
East Side	1,384	796	533	0	57	590
West Side	3,072	2,266	433	240	133	806



TOTAL	4,456	3,062	966	240	190	1,396
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- Overall a 116m<sup>2</sup> loss of grass from 3.178m<sup>2</sup> to 3,062m<sup>2</sup> – an actual 4% loss of registered grassed area.
- Overall an increase in area of protected registered Town Green from 3,774m<sup>2</sup> to 4,456m<sup>2</sup> – an increase of 18% over the existing protected space, e.g through the narrowing and realignment of the south side of Upper Green West opposite Iceland and the narrowing of the current parking area on the north side of Upper Green East near to Ladbrokes.

It should be noted, however that the answers to the questions above do not complete the picture of actual areas of grass lost and gained in and around the Fair Green that are not currently registered, or will not be registered as town green under the proposals.

#### Not currently registered

The original north-south route of London Road across the green was never declassified (or stopped up) as highway. As a result this space does not form part of the Town Green designation. This is a space approximately 12.5m wide across the Fair Green that is not currently designated as Town Green. The majority of this space is currently grassed. The proposed bus route will occupy much of this space, although it will be approximately half the width of the former highway. This space currently grassed and unprotected is 531m<sup>2</sup>. Of this 323m<sup>2</sup> will become part of the proposed bus route. The space between the protected east and west sides of the Fair Green will be narrowed from 12.5m (the original road width) to 6.5m. The remaining 208m<sup>2</sup> will be paved in Yorkstone and form part of the proposed new protected Town Green designation. So this amounts to an increase in protected space with high quality materials, but a reduction in actual grass.

Also the narrowing of the junction on the North side of Upper Green West (near Skippers) will increase the amount of unregistered grassed area by approximately 100m<sup>2</sup>.

12. From Alan Hutchings (not attending)

To Councillor Andrew Judge, Cabinet Member for Environment and Regeneration.

“What evidence the Council has of the level of support for its bus lane proposal across Mitcham Fair Green, specifically from local shops and services, in the light of the Mitcham Society survey that showed 80% of them are opposed to it?”

Reply

The evidence of business support and local residents is via two extensive consultations including the distribution of 50,000 brochures across the CR4

postcode and extensive publicity and engagement including internet based surveys. These surveys have resulted in two endorsements of the bus lane proposal, both in principle in the 2012 consultation (71% in favour) and the specific proposal in the 2013 consultation (62% in favour). In fact in both consultations businesses supported the bus lane proposal more than the general public (with 71% supporting the bus lane in the 2013 consultation). It is also relevant to note that this support has been consistent for at least 10 years, when in 2003 an earlier consultation on a bus lane proposal through London Road demonstrated 63% support.

13. From Zac Toerien (in attendance)

To Councillor Andrew Judge, Cabinet Member for Environment and Regeneration.

“Is the Committee, and are the Councillors, aware of the support for Greyhound racing at Wimbledon Greyhound Stadium?”

Reply

The council is aware of the support for greyhound racing at Wimbledon Greyhound Stadium. Responses to the nine months of public consultation on the Sites and Policies Plan over the past two years has illustrated both support for and objection to greyhound racing, football and the redevelopment of the site in general, as well as many other issues. Responses can be found on the council's website via [www.merton.gov.uk/environment/planning/sites\\_policies\\_plan](http://www.merton.gov.uk/environment/planning/sites_policies_plan) . To date the council has not received a planning application from any party with regards to Wimbledon Greyhound Stadium.

14. From Lucy Hedden (not attending)

To Councillor Andrew Judge, Cabinet Member for Environment and Regeneration.

“Does the Council plan to apply for the Grade 11 listed clock in Mitcham town centre to be de-listed?”

Reply

As part of the Rediscover Mitcham proposals it is intended to relocate the Grade II listed Clock Tower to a location approximately 50m to the south east of its current location. The Clock Tower will be restored and sited in a new garden space with seating. As part of this relocation planning permission is required, and Listed Building Consent is also required from English Heritage. Advice from English Heritage on the appropriate procedure is that the clock will not need to be de-listed. Once the tower has been restored and re-sited, an updated list description will be issued, with accurate details of its new position.

15. Rebecca Richman (advice re attendance awaited)

To Councillor Andrew Judge, Cabinet Member for Environment and Regeneration.

"Has the Committee, and have the Councillors, taken into consideration that the plans of Paschal Taggart for Site 37 - Wimbledon Greyhound Stadium - will not only transform what is an eyesore and embarrassment to the Borough but will also provide a world class greyhound stadium, international standard Squash and Fitness Club and up to 500 subsidised secure parking spaces for staff at St George's NHS Hospital?"

Reply

The council has taken all responses that we have received on the Sites and Policies Plan (which contains Site 37 – Wimbledon Greyhound Stadium) into consideration as part of the nine months of public consultation over past two years, including those submitted by Hume Consulting. Responses can be found on the council's website via [www.merton.gov.uk/environment/planning/sites\\_policies\\_plan](http://www.merton.gov.uk/environment/planning/sites_policies_plan)

16. Katie Lacey (advice re attendance awaited)

To Councillor Andrew Judge, Cabinet Member for Environment and Regeneration.

"Considering that you have a duty to act in the interests of your constituents, what do the residents of Rookwood Avenue need to do to uphold their public right of way within the development, which has been used for more than 40 years, and what are you going to do to ensure that this happens?"

Reply

Public Rights of Way are either created (by Order) or by dedication by the Land Owner (either expressly or by presumption). In terms of statute, the Highways Act 1980 requires a path to be used continuously for 20 years for a path to be proven as a public right of way. To maintain a public right of way, the Definitive Map and Statement need to be modified to add that path to the Definitive Map. This is done by an application under Section 53(5) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. This section of the Act enables any person to apply to the Local Authority for an Order to be made to modify a Definitive Map and Statement. The procedure for making and determining applications is set out in Schedule 14 of this Act.

An application must be made in the prescribed form (Regulation 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside (Definitive Maps and Statements) Regulations 1993) and must be accompanied by:

(a) A map drawn to the prescribed scale and showing the way or ways to which the application relates; and

(b) Copies of any documentary evidence (including statements of witnesses) which the applicant wishes to add in support of the application.

Notice that an application for an Order has been made must be served by the applicant to every owner and occupier of the land involved. The Local Authority is required to investigate all applications as soon as is reasonably practicable and decide whether to make an Order on the basis of the evidence provided. In the event of an authority refusing to make an Order, the applicant has the right of appeal to the Secretary of state against that decision.

The residents of Rockwood Avenue need follow the procedures describes above and apply for a modification order to add this path to the Public Right of Way Definitive Map and Statement. The Council will provide guidance to residents pursuing this process.

17. From Lucinda Ager (in attendance)

To Councillor Andrew Judge, Cabinet Member for Environment and Regeneration.

“Has the Committee, and have the Councillors, considered the financial benefits, such as higher rates than currently it receives from the site, and the job opportunities for local residents (hundreds of interesting and well-paid jobs) which will benefit the Borough under the proposed multi-sports complex plans of Paschal Taggart (Hume Consulting) for Site 37 (Wimbledon Greyhound Stadium)?”

Reply

To date the council has not received a planning application from any party with regards to Wimbledon Greyhound Stadium. However, as part of the planning process for the future of Site 37 (Wimbledon Greyhound Stadium) and other sites, the council considers the economic benefits that could occur from the redevelopment of the stadium for sports uses, including job creation and retention and support for existing and new businesses. Business rates are not considered as part of the planning process.

18. From David Ryan (in attendance)

To Councillor Andrew Judge, Cabinet Member for Environment and Regeneration.

“Has the Committee, and have the Councillors, taken into consideration that the plans proposed by Paschal Taggart for a world class greyhound stadium will bring thousands of tourists every year from all over the world into the Borough bringing revenue to the Council and local businesses?”

Reply

To date the council has not received a planning application from any party with regards to Wimbledon Greyhound Stadium. However, as part of the planning process for the future of Site 37 (Wimbledon Greyhound Stadium) and other sites, the council considers the economic benefits that could occur from the redevelopment of the stadium for sports uses, including job creation and retention and support for existing and new businesses.

19. From David Massie (in attendance)

To Councillor Andrew Judge, Cabinet member for Environment and Regeneration.

“I note that over several years the Council has introduced various measures in different parts of the town and the village with a view to reducing the amount of rat running that takes place. Now that it has become clear that those previously introduced traffic controlled measures in other parts of Wimbledon has made it worse in the Belvederes.

What proposals does the Council have to remove those measures in order to elevate the situation and reduce the rat running in the Belvederes back at least the level that was experienced before those measures were introduced?”

Reply

It is not clear whether or to what extent traffic amendments in and around Wimbledon have contributed negatively to the situation in the Belvederes area. However what is clear is that the volume of traffic using the Belvedere Roads remain higher than appropriate in a residential area. The Council is developing proposals to improve this situation and hopes to be able to consult residents in due course.

Supplementary

While I am pleased to note that further proposals are to be developed to counteract the traffic in the Belvederes, is it now accepted that the piecemeal of introduction of measures elsewhere in the town is inequitable, in that residents of the Belvederes were not consulted on those, but now residents in adjoining areas are consulted on each set of proposed measures that are brought forward for the Belvederes and that this has created conflict between the local resident groups?

Reply

I am not sure that the evidence is clear that historic measures that were introduced, for example in Queens Road, making that one way, would have been impacted directly on the Belvederes and it could be argued one way or another. Currently measures are being discussed with local ward councillors

in Hillside and Village that include for example measures in relation to the Ridgway, because a great deal of the traffic comes up through Copse Hill, goes along the Ridgway, crosses the mini roundabout and goes down Belvedere Grove. Traffic that is crossing across the borough. If we can deter that through traffic by a series of discrete measures, that could be very helpful and I hope there will be some amelioration of the traffic that Belvederes are experiencing.

20. From Bob McCreery (attendance uncertain)

To Councillor Andrew Judge, Cabinet member for Environment and Regeneration.

“Has the Committee, and have the Councillors, taken into consideration that not only has Greyhound Racing taken place at Site 37 - Wimbledon Greyhound Stadium - since 1928 but that the prestigious William Hill Greyhound Derby has also taken place there since 1985 and that the prize money for the winner of the 2014 Derby has been set at £200,000?”

Reply

To date the council has not received a planning application from any party with regards to Wimbledon Greyhound Stadium. However, the council is aware of the long history of the Wimbledon Greyhound Stadium; we are proud of this association and we are aware of the level of support for greyhound racing on this site, as we are of other potential uses. Responses to the nine months of public consultation on the Sites and Policies Plan over the past two years have illustrated both support for and objection to greyhound racing, football and the redevelopment of the site in general, as well as many other issues. Responses can be found on the council's website via [www.merton.gov.uk/environment/planning/sites\\_policies\\_plan](http://www.merton.gov.uk/environment/planning/sites_policies_plan)

21. From Dr Phil Hogarth

To Councillor Andrew Judge, Cabinet member for Environment and regeneration.

'Will the council undertake to commission a full environmental wildlife survey on the disused playing field (currently classed as green corridor/open space land) at the end of Rookwood Avenue; including publication of results?'

Reply

As part of the council's Sites and Policies Plan and Policies Map, the council has considered whether the land at Rookwood Avenue should be allocated as a site for importance for nature conservation, as well as a green corridor (to help support the movement of animals and plants) and designated open space. An assessment by the council's biodiversity officer illustrated that although the site would not currently qualify to be designated as a Site for Importance for Nature Conservation, if the site were to be allowed to continue

to develop and mature, its wildlife interest may qualify for designation at the next revision of the plan. The council is proposing to continue the planning designation of the site as green corridor (to help support the movement of animals and migration of plants) and proposing a new designation for the site as open space.

#### Supplementary

Given the Council proposed to keep the designation of open space and green corridor on the proposed land, will the Planning department therefore commit to investigate the damage done by developers already in cutting down a lot of trees in this area before they've even applied for change of use?

#### Reply

Thank you for raising this issue. I hadn't appreciated that trees had been cut down. If there are Tree Preservation Orders in place for any of those, then that could be a Planning breach and we would want to look at that. If officers review the position in the light of current policy and see what we can do to preserve that area, I can't promise more than that at the moment.

#### 22. From R Harris (attendance not certain)

To Councillor Andrew Judge, Cabinet Member for Environment and Regeneration.

"Is it, as rightly should be the case, the intention of Merton Council to preserve, as is, the wild area at Rookwood Avenue and designate the pedestrian route across this land as a "Public Right of Way", thus preventing development of this land, which would further blight this residential area?"

#### Reply

The council is not only proposing the retention of the Green Corridor planning designation (to help support the movement of animals and plants) across the land at the end of Rookwood Avenue, West Barnes, but is also proposing to designate the land as open space as part of the Sites and Policies Plan and Policies Map. The council provides information on public rights of way on our website [www.merton.gov.uk/publicrightsofway](http://www.merton.gov.uk/publicrightsofway) and we are happy to work with interested parties on new proposals for public rights of way.

#### 23. From Jan Donoghue (attendance not certain)

To Councillor Andrew Judge, Cabinet Member for Environment and Regeneration.

"The mayor has shown his concern over the loss of the greyhound stadium on the site and is keen to retain greyhound racing in the capital. Given Wimbledon Greyhound Stadium is now the last stadium in the capital

shouldn't this form part of and be written into the Sites and Policies Development Plan Document?"

Reply

The council takes account of all responses received to the Sites and Policies Plan, including those from the Mayor of London. Responses to the nine months of public consultation on the Sites and Policies Plan over the past two years has illustrated support for and objection to greyhound racing, football and the redevelopment of the site in general, as well as many other issues. Responses can be found on the council's website via [www.merton.gov.uk/environment/planning/sites\\_policies\\_plan](http://www.merton.gov.uk/environment/planning/sites_policies_plan)