

Agenda Item 26

Public Questions to Full Council 7 February

1. Derek Manning To the Cabinet Member for Finance

What does it say about this council that it is willing to gift MERTON HALL - facility GIFTED TO US by JOHN INNES for use by the entire community - to a church focused on a very narrow section of the community?

Reply

Merton is committed to ensuring children get the best possible education and the upgrading of Merton Hall is a key element in achieving that. We have a statutory duty to ensure there are sufficient school places, and thanks to the success of Merton's good and outstanding schools we have an increasing demand for school places and need a new school. The Council has approached the process in a business-like manner. After much consideration, and consultation with the government's Education and Skills Funding Agency and the preferred school provider, a site was identified at High Path. However, in order to assemble the site at the lowest possible cost to local council tax payers, it has been necessary to obtain the land from existing owners. Contrary to suggestions, the site at Merton Hall is not being 'gifted'; it is part of a land swap that is integral to assembling the site. By swapping an upgraded Merton Hall for that land, the council will deliver best value for money and a much-needed new secondary school. All of these matters have been discussed and agreed at public meetings over a long period, most recently at Cabinet in December 2017, and at the subsequent Scrutiny Call-in on that decision on 10 January. I would urge Mr Manning to review the rationale in the numerous Cabinet papers for more detail, and hope that he will welcome our much-needed new school, which would not be possible without this land swap.

2. From: Portia Dadley To the Cabinet Member for Community and Culture

Given that this year is the centenary of the Representation of the People Act 1918 and votes for women, what measures is Merton Council taking to celebrate the life and work of Merton suffragette Rose Lamartine Yates, who fought for that ground-breaking legislation?

Reply

Throughout 2018 Merton Heritage Service will be working with local schools, Merton museums, historical societies, community groups and external heritage organisations to run a programme of activities and events, marking the centenary of women's voting rights in the UK. This will include film screenings, exhibitions, heritage trails, craft workshops, oral history and debates. The main commemorative programme will run from May to October and events will be staged at libraries and community venues across the borough to highlight this important historical landmark.

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Particular attention will be given to raising awareness of the people, places and events linked to the women's suffrage campaign in Merton, including the work of key individuals such as Josephine Butler, Bertha Lorsignol and Wimbledon WSPU Organising Secretary, Rose Lamartine Yates. Rose will be commemorated through an exhibition at Merton Heritage Centre; a guided walk through Wimbledon and Merton Park; themed class sessions for Merton schools; the naming of a rose (to be planted in John Innes Park) and the re-enactment of a suffragette garden party in the grounds of her former home, Dorset Hall.

3. From: Sofia Parente To the Cabinet Member for Education

Why has Merton's school food provider Chartwells lost Food for Life catering mark accreditation when this was central to the company winning the contract in the first place? How do you ensure the quality and sustainability of school food is maintained? Will you renew their contract?

Reply

Chartwells have not lost catering mark accreditation – the position is that the previous contractor up to summer 2016 had Food for Life gold accreditation which they built up over several years. Chartwells have not reached Food for Life gold accreditation - there is no contractual requirement to do so and it is only one measure in determining the overall quality of the service. To ensure quality the contractor has a detailed specification that we monitor to, and there is a programme of council monitoring visits and regular meetings with the contractor to discuss quality. The contract with Chartwells can be either renewed or extended from 1 September 2019 and the council will make a decision in partnership with schools before the school summer holidays.

4. From: Andrew Biden To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration Environment and Housing

Please provide details of the proposed consultation process (if any) regarding how the s106 monies from the Wimbledon stadium redevelopment will be used to benefit the immediate locality.

Reply

As with all major planning permissions, S106 agreement set out mandatory measures and controls that are required to make the development acceptable in planning terms as approved by Planning Applications Committee at its meeting held on 10 December 2015. A summary of the S106 Heads of Terms can be found in the officer report and minutes and modifications for that committee meeting on the council's website. Improvements to the locality include investment in the roads and pavements, funding for local healthcare, funding for the play facilities nearest the site (Garratt Park). The S106 agreement is published on the council's planning explorer at the following location:

<http://planning.merton.gov.uk/MVM/Online/DMS/DocumentViewer.aspx?pk=1000086992&SearchType=Planning%20Application>

5. From: Hina Bokhari

To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration Environment and Housing

50 years ago, Merton promised Little League's founder that pitch hire would be free for the charity, to allow any child to play for free. Will Merton work with Idverde, who now control Merton's green spaces, to keep Little League free for all and not charge each league £4,000 pa.?

Reply

Given the considerable pressures on local government finances, which affect the London Borough of Merton, the Council have had to reconsider the way in which it funds the services it provides. There is a cost to the Council for the maintenance of sports pitches and our open spaces. Furthermore, the demands of the Little Leagues have grown considerably since they were first founded with more pitches required for longer periods of time. Therefore, the Council has, together with its operational contractor, idverde, reluctantly been forced to review the historical arrangements and not least because the Little Leagues have grown and developed during that time period.

As far as we are aware, Little Leagues around the country pay for the use of the facilities that they enjoy. This is certainly the case in the London Borough of Sutton, for example, with whom we share a grounds maintenance provider and contract. Merton has been able to support these activities for free for several decades now, and not simply by providing free pitches but several other ancillary benefits too: free pavilion hire and utilities, for example.

Many different clubs and groups use our sports pitches for a range of sports. It is important that we are consistent in our charging for the use of sports pitches. There is no other junior sports initiative that has enjoyed the same favourable benefits as the Little Leagues. The introduction of modest charges for the use of pitches puts the Little League on the same arrangement as junior cricket, junior tennis and junior rugby and indeed other junior football initiatives.

The suggested charges are currently the subject of an ongoing discussion with the Little Leagues, but whatever final figure is agreed, it is clear that it will be a very favourable rate that still represents a significant subsidy compared to the overall maintenance costs. Merton remains committed to supporting Little leagues football and will work to ensure the costs reflect value for money in the context of the overall financial challenges we face.

Supplementary

Thank you Madam Mayor and thank you to the Cabinet Member for his answer. Will the Council release details of the contract for our parks to the friends groups to

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reassure residents they are not incentivising Idverde to introduce charges like the ones proposed for Little League?

Reply

We don't release the confidential details of contracts but what I will do is I will take that back and find out exactly what we will be doing for you. I'm not going to make any guarantees on the timing. Thank you.

6. Anthony Fairclough

To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration Environment and Housing

Why has Merton not joined other London boroughs in signing up to the new London-wide database of rogue landlords?

Reply

Merton has advised the GLA of its intention to sign up to the new London Wide database of rough Landlords.

7. Barry Smith

To the Cabinet Member for Street Cleanliness and Parking

What action are Merton taking to combat engine idling, and why has Merton not signed up to London-wide initiatives on this that are receiving funding from the Mayor's Air Quality Fund?

Reply

The Council is currently in the process of finalising its new Air Quality Action Plan, as part of this plan there is a strong commitment to tackle the issue of anti-idling in hotspots throughout the borough. As this is a new process we will need a little time to adopt the provisions and determine the enforcement processes within the borough.

There are a number of initiatives that we are reviewing as part of our joined working in London around air quality, however any enforcement plan in Merton needs to be specific to our borough, focused on areas of concern and produce measurable results.

8. From: Somayeh Aghnianejad

To the Cabinet Member for Finance

In the last 3 years, how often have community representatives been invited to participate in the procurement process, both number of occasions and % of council contracts?

Reply

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Community representatives have been invited to participate in the procurement process on 11 occasions in the last 3 years. Due to the level of information held on our Contracts Register, we are unable to provide an accurate percentage of Council contracts that this equates to. As outlined in the Procurement Strategy, we will be working closely with departments and providing training to improve the data captured on the Contracts Register.

9. From: Lynne Gordon

To the Cabinet Member for Street Cleanliness and Parking

The area around Wimbledon Library has been plagued with litter problems for a long time now. Can the cabinet member tell me what actions he is taking to address this problem?

Reply

We are aware that there have been particular problems with litter and fly-tipping around the Wimbledon Library. This is a result of a number of issues, many of which relate to the individuals dumping waste in and around the Neighbourhood Recycling Centre at that location as well as next to the Commercial Waste bins. Our Environmental Enforcement Team have been carrying out some investigative work to identify those who are fly-tipping and where possible, issue Fixed Penalty Notices. Meanwhile, our Neighbourhood Client Team has been working to address problems with waste and recycling collections at this site to improve the area.

Supplementary

Thank you to the Cabinet Member for answering the question. It would be very useful if we can have the answers a little earlier so we can actually get back to it. There seems to be a Borough-wide failure in the recycling rubbish and street cleaning, I came here to talk about Hillside but this is a Borough-wide problem. Flytipping would appear to be the symptom rather than the cause. There is definitely inadequacy of rubbish and recycling facilities, inadequate rubbish collection services and a virtual absence of street cleaning. So yes, please pursue flytippers. But I'd like to ask the Cabinet Member, what are they doing about getting effective street cleaning, collection services and getting Veolia to actually adhere to their contract?

Reply

Thank you Ms Gordon for your supplementary question. In terms of what we are doing as a Local Authority; we are closely monitoring the contract with Veolia to make sure that they are delivering on the service that they are being paid to provide. We have instilled penalties against Veolia since the contract started as well as withheld payment from them. In terms of looking forward, from October 2018 we will be making sure that there are adequate facilities in terms of recycling and refuse presentation in the form of wheeled bins.

**10. From: Klaartje Dresselaers
To the Cabinet Member for Children's Services**

How does Merton assist families of children with SEN, EHCP and physical disabilities to know what support is available to them and access the available support?

Reply

We work hard to assist families of children with SEN, EHCP and physical disabilities and have actively involved children and families in developing our local offer. The offer includes the following:

- 1) We have a local offer that outlines the support and services to children with SEN, EHCP's and Disabilities. This is advertised and promoted by all staff.
- 2) We have a single point of access at SEN@merton.gov.uk where parents can contact SENDIS regarding any queries.
- 3) If the child has or is going through an EHCP the Senior Case Officer allocated provides them with information and guidance regarding their child's individual needs
- 4) We provide training to SENCO's and Head Teachers regarding services for CYP with SEN and Disabilities
- 5) We have a SEND Interventions team who are available to provide time limited support and signposting regarding services and support for CYP with SEN and Disabilities.
- 6) The Head of SENDIS and other members of the SLT meet regularly with Kids First the parent/carer forum regarding support and information available to CYP with SEN and Disabilities.
- 7) Merton has an independent Information and Advice Service (MIAS) who provides advice, guidance and support to parents/carers of children with SEN and Disabilities

We are however not complacent and are currently promoting our offer to ensure all professionals are aware and can signpost parents appropriately. We have recently reviewed the portal with parents to make it more accessible.

**11. From: John Tippett-Cooper
To the Cabinet Member for Street Cleanliness and Parking**

Will the Council consider the concerns of many Merton residents and, once the new fortnightly waste collection arrangements come into force, provide a weekly collection service for hygiene waste, such as nappies?

Reply

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There are currently no plans to introduce a weekly collection of refuse waste for households with hygiene waste. Providing that the waste is appropriately wrapped there are no health issues with this waste been collected on alternate weeks. Larger households with young children will be able to request a larger wheelie bin if required.

The major contributor to the' smelly waste' is food and as this is collected weekly there are no health concerns with moving to an alternate week collection for the general waste.

Furthermore, we offer residents a dedicated clinical waste service for the safe disposal of used syringes and needles; dressings and surgical waste. Further details are available on our website: <https://www.merton.gov.uk/rubbish-and-recycling/bulky-hazardous-and-clinical-waste/clinical-waste>

Supplementary

Thank you very much Chair. Just to follow on from the question I asked, I know that it is stated that nappies do not constitute smelly waste, that it is in fact food that constitutes that, I doubt that many parents in Merton would necessarily agree with that summary; but can the Council at least agree to explore the costs of either a weekly hygiene waste collection or alternative support for parents who are going to have to store two weeks worth of nappies in their new large wheelie bins?

Reply

I'd like to welcome the Lib Dem Candidate for Dundonald Ward. In terms of our Waste Services we procured it with 3 other Boroughs: Croydon, Sutton and Kingston. I understand that Sutton is run by the Lib Dems and they are currently in the process of having the same system that we will be looking to. So in terms of nappy waste, over three quarters of Local Authorities in the UK actually have a wheeled bin service so this is nothing new that we are introducing here. If it worked for people in Kingston, if it works for people in Sutton if it works for three quarters of Local Authorities across the UK, then I think it will work for Merton.

12. From: Tamara Kohler

To the Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Engagement and Equalities

Merton council reports high levels of satisfaction with its services across the borough, yet the majority of residents need little interaction with the council. What is the satisfaction level with council services amongst residents who have the most frequent contact with the council (e.g. receiving benefits, social care, SEN/EHCP)?

Reply

As part of our resident's survey, respondents are asked, which of a list of services provided locally do they or members of their household use. The list consists of leisure and sports facilities; recycling facilities; libraries; parks, playgrounds and open spaces; nursery education (under 5's) provided by Merton Council; primary

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education (5-11's) provided by Merton Council; secondary education (11-18's) provided by Merton Council; and Parking services: resident permits, on street parking and car parks. For most of the service user groups respondents were more or as satisfied with the council when compared to all respondents. The users of leisure and recycling facilities were more satisfied by a statistically significant margin. The results are set out in the table below.

	% using service	Net Satisfied	Net Dissatisfied
Leisure and sports facilities	35%	72%	12%
Recycling facilities	74%	69%	13%
Libraries	40%	69%	12%
Parks, playgrounds and open spaces	79%	67%	14%
Nursery education (under 5's) provided by Merton Council	9%	66%	18%
Primary education (5-11's) provided by Merton Council	13%	74%	9%
Secondary education (11-18's) provided by Merton Council	5%	59%	25%
Parking services: resident permits, on street parking and car parks	51%	68%	13%
All respondents	100%	67%	14%

**13. From: Hayley Ormrod
To the Cabinet Member for Street Cleanliness and Parking**

The streets around where I live and across residential areas of Wimbledon Town Centre are very dirty. During refuse collection Veolia employees tip out waste and leave a stream of it behind them. Lack of leaf collection has left streets/pavements muddy/dirty. What actions is the council taking to address this?

Reply

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Our contractor, Veolia is required to maintain the required level of street cleaning across the borough. To achieve this consistent standard of cleansing, Veolia use a number of different methods of cleaning the streets and alter the frequency depending on the footfall and littering of the area concerned. Street operatives conduct manual litter picking and broom sweeping alongside mechanical and electrical sweepers which provide an efficient and effective way to lift litter and detritus from Merton's streets.

Our refuse crew are required to clean up any spillage caused during the collection of waste and each crew is equipped with shovel and brooms. Where problems with spilled waste occur, our contractor carries out further training and guidance for those crew members.

Research carried out by the Tidy Britain Group on behalf of the council, indicated that as much as 50% of all street waste arising in residential roads can be attributed to the black sack and box collection schemes operated within Merton. In October 2018 we will be introducing a wheelie bin collection service which will greatly reduce the level of street blown litter from the boxes and torn black sack waste created by foxes and other animals.

Supplementary

Thank you Madam Mayor and thank you to the Cabinet Member for your response. The problem with street cleaning is that is has got significantly since the Lead Cabinet Member handed over service to Veolia; I don't recall streets remotely as filthy before Veolia took over. Collections took place and street cleaners followed the refuse collections on a weekly basis. This doesn't happen anymore. My question is now, what proof do you have that wheelie bins will work for Merton?

Reply

I'd like to thank the Conservative Trinity candidate for coming to ask a Supplementary Question. I'm sure we will be crossing paths during the election campaign and discussing this issue in great depth and I look forward to it. In terms of wheeled bins I'd just like to reflect on the previous answer in terms of two thirds of Local Authorities across the UK have wheeled bins, there are studies such as the WRAP study into wheeled bins that shows that it proves that there is a reduction of up to 50% in street waste that is impacted by having the wheeled bins and we saw in the Lavender Fields trial that by having wheeled bins the streets were cleaner. So I think there is a lot of evidence out there in terms of why wheeled bins are the answer and that is why this Local Authority has decided to adopt them in October 2018.

14. From: Michael Ormrod

To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration Environment and Housing

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The 2 taxi rank bays outside Centre Court allow for taxi drivers to wait for the lights to turn red outside the prince of wales waiting for a bay and causes backups down Hartfield Rd toward the entry/exit to Morrisons car park. Can enforcement cameras be installed to prevent this?

Reply

The council will review any CCTV evidence of this practice and consider whether cameras, or on-foot patrol will be the best form of enforcement. We will also report this to Transport for London's taxi division to bring it to their attention.

15. From: Luke Taylor

To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration Environment and Housing

How does the council currently prioritise CIL funding for each functional area (schools/community centres/transport etc) and what proportion of CIL funding has been spent on individual areas for each of the last 4 years?

Reply

To date, the Council has allocated CIL funding towards the construction of the new Morden Leisure Centre. This allocation totalled £2.7 million which has been spent over 2017-18. Morden Leisure Centre was identified as a key infrastructure item required to support the development of the borough including the planned regeneration of Morden Town Centre, as part of the preparation of the adopted Merton Core Strategy. The Leisure Centre was the first to be allocated funding as it was the first project on the CIL (Regulation 123) List to come forward for funding that was ready for allocation (e.g. planning permission granted and construction ready to start) During 2018-19 the council will consider CIL funding for further major infrastructure projects where they are ready for allocation. In addition, in September 2017 Merton's Cabinet approved the governance and allocation criteria for the Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy fund. Public consultation took place from November 2017 to January 2018 to ask for specific projects. In January 2018 Cabinet allocated £5,000 to every ward in the borough for small scale public space projects and set aside up to £213,000 to partner fund the delivery of Merton's London Borough of Culture bid, should the council be successful. Officers are now assessing the representations received at the recent consultation against the Neighbourhood CIL criteria and will recommend allocations to councilors for the 2018-19 financial year. More information can be found on Merton's Community Infrastructure Levy "spending the levy" webpage.

<https://www2.merton.gov.uk/environment/planning/cil/spendingthelevy.htm>

16. From: Edward Gretton

To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration Environment and Housing

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How is the Council working to resolve the traffic congestion at the Durnsford Road / Plough Lane box junction?

Reply

In March 2017, the capacity and the operation of this junction was fully reviewed by TfL and as part of Merton's proposal to removed all the banned movements at that time, the signals were modified to operate at its optimum. The road network are all London distributor road and it is operating better than some other junctions in the Borough. The Council, therefore, has no plans for this junction at this time.

ANPR enforcement cameras are currently in place in Durnsford Road leading up to the junction of Gap Rd. However, the coverage of these enforcement does not extend to cover and enforce in the location referred to. The parking enforcement team have advised that they will now carry out a site survey to measure the lack of non-compliance by the motorists at Durnsford Road/Plough Lane. If the assessment demonstrates a proven need for the installation of enforcement cameras at this location then, subject to a technical feasibility assessment these could be installed.

Supplementary

Thank you very much Madam Deputy Mayor. I have another question to the Cabinet Member for Merton's Street Cleanliness I think he calls himself; the question relates to the box junction at Durnsford Road which has appalling traffic jams and terrible road congestion there and air pollution in Haydons Road and he's responded by saying that this junction works very well, he's got no plans to review it or look at it at all. Does he accept that there is a very serious design problem with this junction given reports in the Wimbledon Guardian that residents have been fined about £130,000 in 2017 alone?

Reply

Thank you. Can I welcome another Conservative candidate. In relation to the box junction of course we undertake a regular assessment of accidents at that junction and if necessary we do take action. Clearly in terms of traffic congestion, traffic congestion happens at many junctions across the Borough. ANPR enforcement cameras are there to ensure that traffic enforcement is actually carried out, that the junction is able to flow. Clearly from time to time we will undertake improvements but those improvements have to be justified in terms of accident data and records but I do note the comments that Mr Olroyd (sic) has made but at this present time we have no further plans to undertake work at this junction.

17. From: Laura Paine To the Cabinet Member for Children's Services

The minutes of the last meeting referred to facilities for physical activity in children's playgrounds, paired with statistics for levels of physical activity of 15 year olds who are beyond the age range of most playgrounds. What is Merton doing to encourage physical activity in adolescents/older children?

Reply

Merton's Child Healthy Weight Action plan theme 3 is about promoting physical activity and physical activity promoting environments. As part of this, schools are being encouraged and supported to sign up and achieve their Healthy Schools Status (Bronze, Silver, Gold) where Physical Activity is one of the key elements. Ensuring children and young people achieve a minimum of 90 minutes to 2 hours curriculum PE a week and health-related exercise should be included in the curriculum as part of the criteria to achieve award. One secondary school has achieved their Bronze award and others are being supported to achieve their bronze awards through the Merton School Sports Partnership (MSSP). MSSP also support schools with inter school sports competitions and holiday physical activity programmes to get children and young people more active. A Merton Mile will be implemented in 2018 in one of the local parks which will mark out a 1 mile path in a local park to promote daily physical activity and making use of local parks which will also be available for adolescents/older children to use.

Children's playgrounds have an upper age limit of around 14 years old. For age groups above this, there are other recreational facilities available including (but not limited to) a skate park, 1 dedicated teen play area (Morden Park), 10 outdoor gyms, 22 Multi Use Games Areas, 2 crazy golf courses, and numerous sports pitches/courts to encourage adolescents/older children to be physically active.

There is a BMX track in Mitcham (run by Mitcham Saints), the 3 leisure centres and the Watersports Centre at Wimbledon Park (which is mainly utilised by school age children). In addition to school groups which use these facilities, there are also specific sessions run for voluntary groups such as scouts and guides who cater for teens out of school hours. The council also has various summer/holiday activity programmes running to encourage physical activity in adolescents/older children. Merton Active gives details on physical activity opportunities available in Merton for children up to the age of 18 years. The Sports Blast programme also encouraged 14 to 25 year olds to get physically active and ran for 3 years (ended in 2017).

**18. From: John Braithwaite
To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration Environment and Housing**

What is the breakdown of how Section 106 contributions have been spent/allocated for different uses (education/transport/community etc) and what benefit has the borough derived from these over each of the last 4 years?

Reply

S106 and CIL is reported each year in Merton's Authority Monitoring Report, available online on Merton Council's website:

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Use	Year	Amount allocated/spent	Benefit
Affordable housing	16/17	£148,963.00	8 New Affordable Housing Units
Community facilities	13/14	£60,000.00	New Scout Hut
Community facilities	14/15	£25,000.00	New Scout Hut
Education	14/15	£1,177,000.00	Expanded schools across the borough
Education	15/16	£844,000.00	Expanded schools across the borough
Employment	13/14	£93,721.00	Enhanced visibility and viability of businesses by encouraging greater access and footfall in Mitcham Town Centre, through public realm/traffic/transport improvements.
Heritage	14/15	£60,485.00	Work towards building a new heritage centre, Chapter House, Merton Priory.
Heritage	15/16	£63,250.00	Work towards building a new heritage centre, Chapter House, Merton Priory.
Leisure	13/14	£165,000.00	Enhanced leisure offer at the Cannons Leisure Centre and St Marks Academy in Mitcham;
Leisure	14/15	£41,450.00	Enhanced leisure offer at the St Marks Academy in Mitcham & Wimbledon Park
Open space	13/14	£10,000.00	Protection of nature conservation assets at Mitcham Common
Open space	14/15	£9,851.93	Open space improvement in

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			Cannizaro, Wimbledon
Open space	15/16	£77,000.00	Transfer of Metropolitan Open Land, in West Wimbledon to the Council enabled; Maintenance and enhancement of sports field, Grand Drive, Lower Morden
Public realm	13/14	£564,010.00	Improved public realm in Colliers Wood, Mitcham and Raynes Park Town Centres
Public realm	15/16	£16,381.33	Improved public realm in Colliers Wood Town Centre
Transport	13/14	£42,562.00	Improving parking environment on Brenley Close. Highways/transport enhancements in Victoria Road, Mitcham
Transport	14/15	£47,000.00	Upgraded highway adjacent to development, Commonside East/Windmill Road, Mitcham
Transport	15/16	£32,000.00	Upgraded highway adjacent to development, Commonside East/Windmill Road, Mitcham

19. From: Carl Quilliam

To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration Environment and Housing

How much section 106 and CIL money has been collected in each of the last four years, and how much of it has been spent in each year?

Reply

S106 and CIL is reported each year in Merton's Authority Monitoring Report, available online on Merton Council's website:

	CIL income	S106 income	CIL Spend	S106 spend
	(excludes Mayoral CIL income for			

Crossrail)				
13/14	£0.00	£1,484,000.00	£0.00	£312,046.08
14/15	£129,717.00	£2,160,000.00	£0.00	£1,718,818.24
15/16	£2,856,810.66	£1,660,000.00	£0.00	£1,655,175.80
16/17	£3,252,986.65	£1,923,000.00	£0.00 (£2.7m committed for 2017/18)	£387,135.39

20. From: Nicola Schofield

To the Cabinet Member for Street Cleanliness and Parking

Given the huge amounts of litter strewn across pavements by inadequate refuse collection, and blocked drains due to unswept fallen leaves, what action will the council take to enforce the Veolia street cleaning contract in South Park Rd (Trinity)? Both immediate remedial action & ongoing to prevent recurrence?

Reply

Our contractor, Veolia, is required to maintain the required level of street cleaning across the borough. To achieve this consistent standard of cleansing, Veolia use a number of different methods of cleaning the streets and alter the frequency depending on the footfall and littering of the area concerned. Street operatives conduct manual litter picking and broom sweeping alongside mechanical and electrical sweepers which provide an efficient and effective way to lift litter and detritus from Merton's streets.

Our refuse crew are required to clean up any spillage caused during the collection of waste and each crew is equipped with shovel and brooms, however research carried out by the Tidy Britain Group on behalf of the council, indicated that as much as 50% of all street waste arising in residential roads can be attributed to the black sack and box collection schemes operated within Merton. In October 2018 we will be introducing a wheelie bin collection service which will greatly reduce the level of street blown litter from the boxes and torn black sack waste created by foxes and other animals.

We are aware that specific issues have been identified around South Park Road. Our Neighbourhood Client Team have been working with Veolia to address this and improvements have recently been achieved.

21. From: Nigel Benbow

To the Leader of the Council

Merton Hall was recently awarded 'Asset of Community Value' status by this Council. Will the Council Leader and his Labour administration therefore pledge not to commence demolition of Merton Hall until after the local elections? Otherwise this is their clear sign of not listening to the residents of South Wimbledon.

Reply

The questions from Nigel Benbow and John Chambers are the same so I will answer them together.

Following the Asset of Community Value (ACV) application in late September 2017, Cabinet expected Merton Hall to meet the criteria to be listed as an ACV, and so carefully considered this matter before making its Merton Hall construction works contract decision on 10 December 2017, which was also subject to post decision scrutiny on 10 January 2018. The position has not changed since then and we will proceed with the proposed building works.

The reason for this is that there is an urgent and compelling need to provide a clear site at High Path to enable works to build the Harris Wimbledon secondary school to a tight timescale; a prompt start to the works at Merton Hall and so the vacating of Elim Church from High Path is the only means to deliver it. The implications of not doing it is that children may be without a statutory school place or the council would need to find alternative means for September 2018 through temporary buildings at considerable cost and disruption. Prior to the rather late ACV listing the Council committed extensive resources to deliver the clear site at High Path for the secondary school, and the Elim Church site is the last piece in the jigsaw to deliver it.

The council will fully comply with the requirements of the ACV listing i.e. relevant local groups will be given the opportunity to come up with a bid for the asset and we would consider these bids at that time. However, it is worth being open with you in that given the benefits that the secondary school land assembly offers in providing statutory school places at a fraction of the cost of alternative means for the council, it is difficult to see how any alternative bid could be received that was affordable to any bidder and could meet "better consideration". Therefore it is correct that the school timetable should not be postponed and the Merton Hall works should proceed.

Supplementary

I am keen to know; Harris Wimbledon School, why are you so keen to go ahead with the demolition of Merton Hall? It proves you're not listening to the people of the Abbey ward. The people are upset and angry and they have a feeling of being ignored and they are not happy about it and I have tried to stand up with them. I must point out, do you believe in equal rights?

Reply

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Thank you, there were a number of items in that question. First, as a former Equality and Human Rights Commissioner, a former Disability Rights Commissioner, I do believe in Equal Rights and this Council, this Labour Council is steeped in Equal Rights and will continue to allocate our Labour values on the issue of Equal Rights. I thank you for asking that element. With regard to the Merton Hall and the Asset of Community Value, the Council is wedded to its statutory duty to provide school places for thousands of children and hundreds of parents in Wimbledon, in South Wimbledon, so we are wedded to that statutory duty and whilst we have allocated Asset of Community Value, we will continue without delay to move towards satisfying that statutory duty that parents look to the Council to provide School Places and at Secondary School Level, clearly now our Schools are Good and Outstanding.

22. From: Gregory Bryant To the Leader of the Council

Does Cllr Alambris personally believe that the Historical Society or Historic England to be 'hysterical', as per his seemingly mocking reference to the institution(s) on a Radio Jackie interview and at a Colliers Wood community meeting in 2017? The institution(s) have been involved in Merton Hall's freehold swap.

Reply

Since it was founded in 1868, the Royal Historical Society has become the foremost society in the UK working with professional historians and advancing the scholarly study of the past. Similarly, the Merton Historical Society undertakes in-depth research on the history of the borough and has always had a hugely respected reputation for its publications.

Historic England, the public body that looks after England's historic environment, does the vital job of championing and protecting historic places, and helping people understand, value and care for them. It carries out and funds high-quality applied research to support the protection and management of the historic environment, offering a range of services including grants, planning, education and research, as well as training and skill development.

One of the key services it manages is getting buildings and sites listed. Listing is the act of identifying the most important parts of our heritage so they can be protected by law. Listing an historic building or site celebrates its significance and makes sure that our history can be enjoyed by present and future generations.

I applaud the work of these prestigious and influential bodies and Historic England's co-operation with the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport so he can come to sound decisions on the status of buildings in Merton, such as the recent decision on Merton Hall.

Supplementary

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Yes thank you. The Supplementary Question is for the Leader of the Council. If you had replied to my question stating that you hold the bodies in high esteem, then why call them hysterical repeatedly? Do you suffer from a personality disorder or are you unable to answer questions correctly?

Reply

I thank Gregory Bryant for his main question and for his supplementary question. I'll refer him to the written answer which shows the respect that we hold for the two organisations which he mentioned.

23. From: Paul Kohler

To the Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Engagement and Equalities

Previously I asked what discussions the Council has had with MPs Stephen Hammond/Siobhain McDonagh about the closure of Wimbledon Police station, but the response failed to answer my question. Am I to understand from this obfuscation that the Council has had no discussions with either MP on this important issue?

Reply

The consultation process on the Metropolitan Police Estate was a MOPAC lead initiative and not a local borough one. The consultation proposed to close Wimbledon Police Station whilst retaining the site/buildings of Mitcham. The borough did participate in the consultation process returning a response that was a collective process using consolidated contributions from statutory partners, elected representatives and community personnel.

The council response was apolitical. Council officers did not meet with either MP as part of this process.

24. From: Simon McGrath

To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration Environment and Housing

Where the Planning Committee has approved a development with less than 40% affordable homes and a follow up review of sale prices has been carried out ,can you please state what the results of these reviews have been for each of the last 3 years?

Reply

Each individual case is assessed and the review undertaken where appropriate . The results for each case will be different depending on the circumstances of the scheme. Quite a few schemes may not have been implemented at all. The overall position is not monitored in those terms but the overall delivery of affordable housing is included in the annual monitoring report.

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Many of the schemes with review mechanisms as part of the S106 have recently received planning permission and have not yet met the target date to trigger a review (usually relying on complete construction, sales or occupation of the scheme). One scheme that has met its trigger is Linden Homes, 71-91 Hartfield Road, Wimbledon. A review was undertaken and in 2016-17 a financial contribution of £454,482 was paid to the council to spend on affordable housing in the borough as a result of the review.

25. From: Emily Robertson To the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health

The Labour motion of 13th September attributes a 20% increase in attendance at St Helier A&E to closure of the Wilson Health Centre, yet in the Mitcham community forum minutes Dr Hing is quoted saying this closure resulted in no increase in A&E visits. How are both parties measuring this?

Reply

The figure used in the motion on 13 September which was unanimously agreed by council came from evidence reported by a Morden-based GP. That figure was put to the Chief Executive of Epsom and St Helier Trust by the Member of Parliament for Mitcham and Morden, and has not been challenged. A rise in presentations at St Helier was reported by a number of others at the time, including Merton Mencap which stated that following the closure of the walk-in centre '*attendance at St Helier Hospital's A&E department has greatly increased.*' (<http://www.mertonmencap.org.uk/pdfs/Adults-First-Newsletter-Autumn2017.pdf>)

Merton Clinical Commissioning Group regularly reviews hospital statistics to look for trends. Using 'SUS'^[1] (hospital activity) data, MCCG report that A&E attendances for Merton GP registered patients have increased by 2.1% (year to date, April-November 2017) across all local hospitals, compared to the same time period last year. This is in line with the national picture.

Specifically at Epsom & St Helier (ESH) A&E, the year to date growth in A&E attendances from Merton GP registered patients is 1.4%, compared to the same time period in the previous year.

Looking at the east of the borough to assess the impact on patients who live in the vicinity of the Wilson Health Centre, MCCG report that hospital activity data for this same time period shows an average 2% increase in A&E attendances at ESH from patients in wards covering the CR4 postcode (Colliers Wood, Cricket Green, Figges Marsh, Graveney, Lavender Fields, Longthornton, Pollards Hill, Ravensbury), compared to the previous year.

^[1] <http://content.digital.nhs.uk/sus>

¹ <http://content.digital.nhs.uk/sus>

**26 From: Jane Barnes
To the Cabinet Member for Community and Culture**

What guarantees can be given on public access in Morley Park in perpetuity – specifically on access to the playing fields, on access to all park paths at normal Merton park opening times, and by prior agreement for community use of the pavilion?

Reply

The proposed arrangements for Morley Park include the transfer of the management of the park from Berkeley Homes to Merton Council who at that point will become the freeholder.

At, or soon after the point of land transfer, the upper section of the new public open space, comprising mainly woodland and meadow, will become freely accessible to the public during standard parks opening hours.

The lower section of the site, by Cottenham Park Road, and comprising mainly a sports field and an associated sports pavilion, will, contemporaneously, be transferred under a lease from the Council to the Ursuline High School. There are provisions within the draft lease, already understood by the school, to ensure that there is public access around the playing fields at all times during operational hours, including at those times when the sports pitches are in use by the school.

Subject to the utilisation of the pavilion by the school, it is anticipated by the Council that the building will be available for hire by other sports clubs and organisations. There are specific provisions within the draft pavilion lease, appreciated by the school, that enables the Council to nominate use of the building to organisations on at least 6 occasions annually. The Council is already minded to allocate those times to local community groups.

**27. From: Vincent Bolt
To the Cabinet Member for Street Cleanliness and Parking**

Will the council agree to monitor air quality within Wimbledon town centre both before and during Wimbledon fortnight, and what additional measures does the council propose to put in place this year and in future years to minimise the impact of Wimbledon fortnight on air quality?

Reply

The council currently has two methods of monitoring air quality in the borough.

The first is through very expensive automated monitoring stations. We have two in the borough, one located in the Civic Centre measuring NO₂, the other in Merton Road monitoring PM10 (particulates).

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The other method is through the use of diffusion tubes for measuring monthly NO₂ averages. Since 2017 we have increased the number of tubes from 20 to 50, with better distribution around the borough. This should allow for assessment in increased traffic along main roads and show changes in air quality.

28. From: John Chambers To the Cabinet Member for Finance

Merton Hall has been listed as an Asset of Community Value, would it not be the correct democratic procedure to allow the Residents the stated 6 months under the act to acquire Merton Hall and preserve it intact for use of all, not the chosen Homophobic few?

Reply

The questions from Nigel Benbow and John Chambers are the same so I will answer them together.

Following the Asset of Community Value (ACV) application in late September 2017, Cabinet expected Merton Hall to meet the criteria to be listed as an ACV, and so carefully considered this matter before making its Merton Hall construction works contract decision on 10 December 2017, which was also subject to post decision scrutiny on 10 January 2018. The position has not changed since then and we will proceed with the proposed building works.

The reason for this is that there is an urgent and compelling need to provide a clear site at High Path to enable works to build the Harris Wimbledon secondary school to a tight timescale; a prompt start to the works at Merton Hall and so the vacating of Elim Church from High Path is the only means to deliver it. The implications of not doing it is that children may be without a statutory school place or the council would need to find alternative means for September 2018 through temporary buildings at considerable cost and disruption. Prior to the rather late ACV listing the Council committed extensive resources to deliver the clear site at High Path for the secondary school, and the Elim Church site is the last piece in the jigsaw to deliver it.

The council will fully comply with the requirements of the ACV listing i.e. relevant local groups will be given the opportunity to come up with a bid for the asset and we would consider these bids at that time. However, it is worth being open with you in that given the benefits that the secondary school land assembly offers in providing statutory school places at a fraction of the cost of alternative means for the council, it is difficult to see how any alternative bid could be received that was affordable to any bidder and could meet "better consideration". Therefore it is correct that the school timetable should not be postponed and the Merton Hall works should proceed.

29. From: Eve Cohen To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration Environment and Housing

The DHP Battle Close Viability Report was flawed - 90 Garfield Road is set back 7m from the boundary allowing a larger building on Battle Close. Will the site therefore

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be re-evaluated with a more innovative approach eg 2 storey section closer to north boundary with outdoor space on roof?

Reply

The Battle Close DHP study is not flawed at all – it clearly shows that a 3-storey building with sports hall to government space standards and minimal external play/PE area would simply not fit on the site. While outdoor space on the roof can provide some use, it is entirely inappropriate for secondary school PE activities such as ball games which is an essential part of the school curriculum and would be ruled out for any scheme as the sole means for outdoor PE, as it was ruled out for High Path.

The DHP site assessment therefore clearly concludes that the minimum height of the school building to fit on the site would be five storeys just as at proposed at High Path. This is hardly surprising since the sites are a similar size. However, unlike High Path it has many residential properties directly backing onto it. This height of building would therefore not be acceptable in this location due to overshadowing to various properties, dominant visual presence directly impacting the views of various properties to the east and west, and overlooking onto neighbouring residential properties.

While the DHP Viability report was based on 90 Garfield Road before its recent development, this is one of many residential properties immediately backing onto the Battle Close (former Virgin Active) site and makes no difference to the overall assessment.

30. From: Paymon Khamooshi To the Cabinet Member for Finance

Which 5 contractors receive the largest % of council contracts, both by number of contracts and value of contracts, and what % do they receive?

Reply

Our spend analysis data for Financial Year 2016/17 shows that the 5 contractors who received the largest percentage of contracts collectively across the Council by value are:

COMENSURA	£ 14,012,466	10%
NEWSCHOOLS (MERTON)	£ 12,454,448	9%
FM CONWAY	£ 7,510,777	5%
KINGSTON CORPORATION (WASTE)	£ 5,409,919	4%
NHS MERTON CCG	£ 3,882,339	3%

The data held by the Council does not allow for reporting on the number of contracts delivered by one contractor. As outlined in the Procurement Strategy, we are working

closely with the eTendering system provider to develop a more comprehensive suite of reports from the system.

**31. From: Emma Maddison
To the Cabinet Member for Street Cleanliness and Parking**

Given the popularity of wood burning stoves, even in smokeless fuel areas, will the council include a review of the usage of these and their impact on local air quality in its review on bonfires?

Reply

Wood burning stoves and their contribution to poor air quality is currently a London wide and National concern. Even though there are controls currently in place relating to Smoke Control Areas and exempted fire places, the increase in popularity of these devices is having a detrimental impact upon air quality.

As well as the national work that's underway at the moment, our Pollution Team in the Regulatory Services Partnership has applied for funding from DEFRA to look at the impact and potential future controls of wood burners. So to conclude, yes this is being considered locally and nationally.

**32. From: Marie Davinson
To the Cabinet Member for Street Cleanliness and Parking**

Nothing being put in place to resolve the daily dumping of waste on road kerbsides from residents above shops or shops converted to residential. What is being put in place to resolve this situation? Money would be better spent on targeting this major issue.

Reply

Merton Council has a dedicated Environmental Enforcement Team that tackles offences such as littering and dumping of waste. They work with residents to inform them of their duties by delivering guidance letters and putting up posters in areas affected by dumping. We have also implemented time-banded collections in Wimbledon and Merton High Street in order to reduce the times of the week when bags are presented for collection. Where engagement and guidance does not work, our enforcement team issues Fixed Penalty Notices to those residents who continually leave their waste on the pavement when it is not their collection day.

**33. From: Zoe Meza Williams
To the Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Engagement and Equalities**

How is the council supporting recent campaigns such as #metoo and #timesup, and does it agree all women should be free to live and work free from harassment and abuse, in Merton and beyond?

Reply

The Council is committed to supporting victims of harassment, abuse, sexual and domestic violence. The council was the first London Borough to adopt the #AskAngela campaign and we now have 100% of licensed premises in Wimbledon signed up to this work and 95% coverage across the borough

We were the second London borough to sign up to the UK Says No More campaign where we are now proudly the biggest supporting borough. The evidence of this coming through our work over the last 12 months and by Merton being honoured to have our DV lead participate as a face in the national campaign

Our work in these areas are promoted weekly, we run a weekly one stop shop, participate in annual campaigns and place articles focused on the areas of VAWG in every My Merton magazine

There is much more to do around encouraging victims of sexual violence to report and this is a commitment which we have and, is something our whole partnership signs up to.

34. From: David Lindsay

To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration Environment and Housing

What steps is the Council taking to prevent the interminable extension of roadworks beyond an agreed date, using 'unforeseen circumstances' as an excuse, not just once, but repeatedly?

Reply

Merton Council assess every extension request on an individual basis. When assessing extensions Merton look at the progress of the works, the attendance of operatives and the disruption caused. There are occasions where "unforeseen circumstances" happen which are not only out of control of the contractor, but also out of control for Merton. While it is unusual that Unforeseen Circumstances happen on multiple occasions on one site, it is very much possible, and the likelihood of them occurring increases in parallel to the complexity of the works.

Where possible we provide as much information as possible via Twitter and the Merton Council website, along with weekly bulletins available to all stakeholders.

If a particular site is causing concern, once further information is provided the Council would be happy to investigate and address the concerns.

35. From: Sara Sharp

To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration Environment and Housing

Why can't the Council kit out Elim Church on a portion of the 9,700 sqm Battle Close site in SW19 - equivalent to its High Path site size -instead of the public's Merton Hall, and use the remaining 8,450 square metres of Battle Close for housing?

Reply

The suggestion has been considered previously and there are two keys reasons why it is not viable – time and value for money.

The suggestion requires a mixed use church and housing development project to be started from scratch, and so one to two years behind the Merton Hall project, which has been nearly two years in the development prior to the council being ready to start works. We have documented on many occasions that the need for the new school places is this September so certainty is required now for High Path to be a clear site for the school to open, and works need to start at High Path in early 2019. The suggestion from Ms Sharp would not therefore deliver this.

Secondly, if Battle Close is suitable for a mixed use development with housing, so it has housing values. Since Elim would also require an equivalent building to be provided this will cost the council considerably more than the Merton Hall proposal.

Lastly, Merton Hall has now been closed for over four months and so all the previous users were re-located some time ago. It is therefore important that it has an appropriate community use as soon as possible, and the Elim proposal provides this.

36. Richard English

To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration Environment and Housing

The Post Office on Kingston Road has been closed since January 5th. This was saved from closure in 2008 by a residents' campaign. What steps are Councillors taking to ensure it reopens soon?

Reply

The Council was notified of this closure on 24th January in a letter from the Post Office Network Operations Manager. This follows the resignation of the Postmaster at this site and we understand that the Post office see the closure as temporary. We understand that the Post Office are actively seeking potential retail partners and we have asked the Merton Chamber of Commerce to circulate this opportunity to their membership and database.

The Council does not regulate Post Office operations, however I shall be writing to the Network Operations Manager to seek assurances that this Post Office will re-open as soon as practically possible. In the meantime If you know anyone who is interested please contact the Post Office Agency Recruitment team contact telephone number: 0845 601 6260.

37. From: Richard Hackforth-Jones

To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration Environment and Housing

Why did Merton Council not apply for any government funding for their EV charge points?

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/funding-for-thousands-of-electric-car-charge-points-unused-by-councils>

Reply

Merton has already successfully bid for government funding for EV charge points via various schemes and is proposing a growth in EV charging points from the current 21 to 125. This includes supporting TfL in the delivery of the borough's first rapid charger and the trial of lamp column chargers.

The borough first rapid charger will hopefully be delivered by TfL by the end of March 2018. The next batch of 36 Source London Chargers (delivered at zero cost to the council by Bluepoint Ltd, including equipment, power supply, maintenance and backroom management) is planned to be installed in April/May 2018, subject to the normal statutory public consultation and notification processes.

The council has also secured funding to trial the use of lamp column charges via the Go Ultra Low City Scheme (Government Grant funded for 75% of the cost of the scheme) managed by London councils and TfL. Potential locations for the socket charges will be found once procurement contracts have been finalised and suppliers agreed.

In addition to the above, at planning applications council officers have successfully negotiated Rapid EV charging points to be installed in publicly accessible car parks, for example at Lidl in north Mitcham. Rapid EV charging points can charge a vehicle from 0 to 80% in 15-30 minutes.

Recent analysis of SMMT (Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders) data for new registrations for ULEV (Ultra Low Emission Vehicles) in Merton has risen from 320 to 560 vehicles in 2017 or a rise of 75%. In recognition of this growth trend the council has a medium term ambition to help facilitate the delivery of a borough-wide network of 125 publically accessible charge points, including supporting TfL in the delivery of the boroughs first rapid charger and the trial of lamp column chargers.

The next batch of 36 Source London Chargers (delivered at zero cost to the council by bluepoint limited, including equipment, power supply, maintenance and backroom management) is planned to be installed in April/May 2018, subject to the normal statutory public consultation and notification processes. The borough first rapid charger will hopefully be delivered by TfL by the end of March. Most councils do not have the specialist and technical resources to manage the electric vehicle charging infrastructure. The rapid technologically evolution of charging equipment and car batteries also makes partnering with suppliers the most effective use of council resources.

The council has also secured limited funding to trial the use of lamp column charges via the Go Ultra Low City Scheme (Government Grant funded) managed by London councils and TfL. As is usually the case with government funding initiatives the grant

only cover 75% of the capital cost. The outstanding funding for on-going maintenance and backroom operations still has to be found by boroughs. Potential locations for the socket charges will be found once procurement contracts have been finalised and suppliers agreed.

**38. From: Geoff Cooper
To the Cabinet Member for Finance**

I would like to know what % of council contracts <£100,000 in the last 3 years received more than the required minimum of 3 bids? What % receive few than 3 bids?

Reply

In the last 3 years from 01 January 2015 to 31 December 2017, 44% of contracts valued <£100,000 received more than 3 responses. The remaining 56% received fewer than 3 responses. The preceding Council Contract Standing Orders (CSOs) sets out a requirement for a Request for Quotation (RfQ) to be sent out to 3 tenderers. The CSOs also state the following:

- *For Contracts with a value at or above £25,000 and below £100,000, the Contract may be procured by any of the following means:*
- *using an existing Corporate Contract or Framework Agreement;*
- *seeking Quotations directly from organisations without advertising; or*
- *advertising the Contract publicly.*

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