

1. From: Alban Thurston

To the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance

Why have Merton's pension trustees ignored Divest Merton's requests to update the Pension Advisory Committee's webpage, [still now - in June 2018- showing appointments in December 2016 & March 2017 as 'future' \(sic\) meetings?](#) Why the misleading, clumsy, incomplete subsumation into the finance committee's webpage?

Reply

We are in the process of uploading details of our meetings onto the Council's internet site. All committee agendas, reports and minutes from March 2016 to July 2018 can be located by clicking on 'Find Meetings and Committees', then clicking 'Pension Fund Investment Advisory Panel'. This provides details of Meetings held by the Panel during this period. We are also in the process of uploading papers for meetings prior to March 2016.

Please note an old site still exists called " Pension Fund Advisory Committee" which is no longer in use and to avoid confusion will be removed.

2. From: Tom Killick

To the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health

What assessment has the Council made of the impact of the South London incinerator on air pollution in Merton, and what steps will the Council take to monitor its impact on air pollution once it starts operating?

Reply

With regards to Air Pollution the waste treatment process is extremely efficient, robust and safe. Emissions are treated to meet required standards under the stringent European Industrial Emissions Directive, which is strictly enforced and monitored by the Environment Agency.

A recently published Health Protection Agency report stated that 'modern, well-managed incinerators make only a small contribution to local concentrations of air pollutants' and that any potential health impacts, if they exist, are likely to be very small and not detectable.

This facility will operate under an Environmental permit. This will require compliance with the requirements of all necessary standards protecting health and the environment.

The facility will be closely monitored by the Environment Agency to ensure that it meets the strict emissions criteria set out in the European Union's Industrial

Emissions Directive. In the case of NO₂ (nitrogen dioxide), the limits at Beddington will be stricter than the European Industrial Emissions Directive limits.

That said and to ensure that we as a borough are not complacent, Merton has included the ERF as 'risk premises' in our Annual Status Report relating to Air Quality in the borough, and we will be working with colleagues in Sutton through our Air Quality Cluster Group to ensure that there is long term monitoring in place to ensure any possible impact is recorded and addressed.

3. From: Barry Smith

To the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health

From the Council's monitoring what was the effect of the Wimbledon tennis fortnight on air quality in Wimbledon?

Reply

This is a very difficult question to answer with any degree of accuracy. Air Quality trends are normally measured over a period of time; these trends can also be affected by weather conditions and cross boundary or regional pollution levels.

We measure Air Quality in the Borough by two methods; permanent automated monitoring and local diffusion tubes.

The permanent stations are extremely expensive and we currently have two in the borough; neither are situated near the Wimbledon Tennis Club.

We have increased the amount of diffusion tubes in the past year from around 20 to 50 and now have a better spread across the borough and particularly our busy high streets.

Each year the Council produces what's called an Annual Status Report (ASR). This report outlines how and where air quality is monitored in the borough. On review of the monthly trends in our ASR around the travel sites to the Tennis Tournament, we cannot see any specific increases in pollution.

4. From: Sandra Vogel

To the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health

Air quality in Mitcham town centre has fallen since 2016 according to a Mitcham Society survey. Does Merton Council agree that something has to be done? Will the council lobby the Mayor of London for a Low Emission Bus Zone to cover Mitcham town centre and Cricket Green?

Reply

Improving air quality is a priority for Merton Council.

Citizen involvement in monitoring is always useful and can help identify local issues that the council's own monitoring network may not necessarily capture.

Air pollution measured by diffusion tubes is normally bias adjusted and annualised so we can see trends over seasons and sometimes years. That said, the monitoring provided by The Mitcham Society does present interesting information.

We are aware that air quality fails legal limits in a number of locations in the borough, and we will be considering things like Clean Air Zones and restrictions where necessary.

We are exploring innovative initiatives that have been pursued in other boroughs, such as 'play streets'; where applications to close quiet neighbourhood streets are encouraged to allow children to play in a healthy environment.

We also think that tackling engine idling in Mitcham could help improve matters.

We are currently recruiting a new Air Quality Officer in the Borough, funded through the Diesel Levy to help deliver the borough's [Air Quality Action Plan](#).

The AQAP identifies four Air Quality Focus Areas, one of which is Mitcham, and identifies a number of priorities to tackle air quality within them, including:

- to identify the key causes of traffic congestion and determine effective measures for improving traffic flow through those areas using detailed air quality and traffic management modelling tools
- to formalise anti-idling enforcement in order to minimise emissions from vehicles (this will also take place in other key locations such as schools)
- to evaluate the air quality benefits and feasibility of introducing 'mini' Ultra-Low Emission Zones in the areas of the borough identified as having the poorest air quality. The mini- ULEZ could incorporate measures such as restricting access to HGVs during peak traffic periods and lobbying the GLA/TfL to ensure that zero emission buses only access routes through Air Quality Focus Areas by 2020.
- Air pollution is recognised as a major contributor to poor health with more than 9,000 premature deaths attributed to poor air quality in London every year. People in London are disproportionately affected by poor air quality compared with other parts of England.
- In Merton, the fraction of mortality attributable to particulate air pollution is 5.3% (Public Health Outcome Framework indicator 3.01, Feb 2017). There are areas within Merton, particularly along main roads, where air pollution levels are consistently high and where people experience significant amounts of exposure, with an impact on respiratory illness.
- Public Health welcomes and supports the evidence and actions set out in Merton's Air Quality Action Plan, which includes Mitcham as an air quality focus area. These actions are a welcome step to reduce the health inequalities that arise from air pollution in London.

We welcome the recommendation to call on Transport for London to create a Low Emission Bus Zone in Mitcham. Lobbying for cleaner buses is also in our Air Quality Action Plan, an activity we will continue to do.

5. From: Klaartje Dresselaers
To the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance

At the Council Meeting on 4.7.2018 the Cabinet Member for Finance said that the Council was undertaking research and gathering best practice to develop an offer of support for EU Nationals. Has this work now been finalised and when will the support be launched?

Reply

Officers continue to assess the potential impact of the UK's withdrawal from the European Union on the council, services and residents of the borough. Our assessment is being informed by government policy documents, announcements and information; analysis and best practice from local government bodies and other boroughs. One of the key implications being researched is Settled Status and the rights of EU nationals that are currently living within the borough. We anticipate that this research will culminate in a briefing that will be available to the council's decision making process from early October. This briefing will look at the ways that the council can support EU residents, particularly those in hard to reach and vulnerable groups, through offering information and advice to those experiencing changes to their status. Cabinet will be asked to make a decision on agreeing to the offer of support, and the required allocation of resources.

6. From: John Davis
To the Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Cleanliness

Residents are perplexed as to who, following outsourcing, is responsible for keeping Statutory Footpaths clear of litter and encroaching vegetation. Mitcham has several paths that have been neglected - Tramway Path and Cold Blows being examples. Please advise responsibilities and time schedules of clearance for all Merton statutory footpaths.

Reply

The public rights of way are the responsibility of the council. The cleaning operation is provided on our behalf by our contractor Veolia.

The contractual standards for street cleaning reflect best practice from Defra's Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse. The contract is based on an output specification requiring the contractor maintain consistent standards across the entire borough. This is a move away from a frequency based approach where standards can fall between sweeps without any obligation on the contractor to resolve the issue. This

approach measures the contractor based on their output rather than the amount of resources they use or the frequency at which they clean the streets.

In order to achieve the required standard, the contractor is required to apply whatever resources, at whatever frequency to maintain the necessary contractual standards. In practice, this means the contractor will apply more resources to town centres than residential areas even though the contract requires the streets in both areas to be maintained to the same standard.

We are aware of the concerns regarding Tramway Path and our Neighbourhood Client Team undertake site inspections and work closely with the contractor's Area Managers to ensure that service standards are maintained and any rectifications are addressed in line with our contractual agreements.

7. From: Rosemary Davis

To the Cabinet Member for Community and Culture

There has been an alarming loss of newly planted material due to recent extreme weather. Shrubs in Holborn Way and trees in Mitcham Fair Green and Colliers Wood are examples. a) What action is the Council planning to address this and b) Are the contractors to be held liable?

Reply

The extreme weather conditions of the summer of 2018 were both exceptional and challenging and impacted both newly-planted and existing trees and shrubs. The annual watering programmes and contractual obligations in relation to planting are commonly designed in advance of and costed around the typical summer season requirements and not extraordinarily protracted periods of drought and hot weather such as we experienced this past summer.

Insofar as existing resources and contractual obligations allow then these losses will be replaced. The Council's general policy is to replace lost street trees wherever possible and practical. Our contractors met their obligations.

We will continue to explore how we can engage Residents to assist in watering young/newly planted trees to assist, particularly at times of low rainfall.

8. From: Tony Burton

To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport

Given the growing number of flats in Mitcham Cricket Green Conservation Area what action will the Council take to control the proliferation of estate agent boards and will it introduce a Regulation 7 Direction under the Town and Country Planning (control of advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 to restrict deemed consent?

Reply

Any unauthorised estate agents advertisement boards can be reported to the Planning enforcement team for investigation and potential action. The use of Regulation 7 is an option and will be considered in the context of the overall demands on the enforcement service.

**9. From: Tamara Kohler
To the Cabinet Member for Children's Services**

How many families across Merton who applied for 30 hours of childcare funding were unable to access this due to lack of available spaces across the borough?

Reply

In Merton during the summer term, 962 children accessed a funded childcare/early education place. The Early Years' service has no recorded incidents/queries/concerns from families not being able to take up a place due to a lack of available places.

**10. From: Somayeh Aghnianejad
To the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance**

Has the council applied for power to retain the growth in business rates within the borough? If not, will it be doing so and if it won't be doing so, please explain why.

Reply

The distribution of business rates collected by local authorities is determined by central government and there are limited opportunities to influence it. When the Business Rates Retention Scheme was introduced in 2013/14, London boroughs shared the Business Rates collected in the ratio 50% to Central Government, 20% to the GLA and 30% to the London borough. Any growth in business rates generated was shared in the same ratio. The Government's stated aim was for local authorities to receive 100% of the rates collected but in return they would lose some of their grants such as Revenue Support Grant. Also local authorities that had high levels of business rates would pay a tariff and those who had lower level would receive a top-up.

In order to test how 100% business rates retention would work, the Government announced a number of pilots and a number of pools were approved. For 2018/19 London boroughs agreed to enter into a pilot pool arrangement based on 100% business rate retention but in return Government Revenue Support Grant was foregone. Also London overall had to pay a net tariff which means that the overall level of collected rates that will be retained is around 64% after the tariff is paid. The London pool will retain 100% of any growth in business rate income above baselines, and will pay no levy on that growth.

In order to be approved all London boroughs needed to be in agreement and the pool had the following principles:-

- The pool in 2018-19 would not bind boroughs or the Mayor indefinitely
- No authority can be worse off as a result of participating
- All members will receive some share of any net benefits arising from the pilot pool

On this basis Merton applied to be part of the pool as it maximises the potential income from Business Rates. All London boroughs backed the proposals and the pilot has commenced for 2018/19. Background details covering the pilot pool arrangements were reported to Cabinet on 11 December 2017.

The 100% pilot pool has only been approved for 2018/19 to date and the Government stated in the Local Government Settlement that it intends to move to a system of 75% business rates retention across local government in 2020/21 and may look to apply this to pools in 2019/20. So there is some uncertainty as to future funding levels at this time.

11. From: Shipra Gupta

To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport

What steps is the council taking to ensure that baby changing facilities across the borough are available to parents of both genders and are not confined just to the Ladies toilets?

Reply

The Building Regulations do not specify an absolute requirement for unisex changing facilities for babies. However, they are encouraged and the Council also encourages developers/designers to provide unisex changing facilities in all cases of new development and also in any retrofit developments where possible. We shall continue to encourage this and use what limited powers we have.

12. From: Joyce Pountain

To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport

A sound map shows Wimbledon will be subjected to 54 decibels of noise from over-flights if a third runway is built at Heathrow.

See <https://www.wimbledonsw19.com/#pages/wimbledonsw19:info:heathrowrunwayeffectonwimbledon001> Why is Merton not joining Hillingdon, Richmond, Wandsworth, Windsor/Maidenhead and Hammersmith/Fulham to oppose the third runway and protect its residents?

Reply

The Council acknowledges the opportunities as well as environmental implications of the third runway at Heathrow and will continue to engage in the consultation and

discussion as this progresses. We also recognise the need for airport expansion in the south east in terms of supporting the economy and jobs but currently we have not taken a position on Heathrow airport expansion.

13. From: Ingrid Dickenson
To the Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Cleanliness

I have been monitoring the state of a street tree at the north end of Haydons Road, outside the Streetside Diner at No 294. It is clearly dead and needs replacing. Could you please let me know when a new tree will be planted?

Reply

The Council's highways tree team is aware of this dead tree.

In general terms, our policy is to replace lost trees wherever practically possible and this location will be added to the list of opportunities for replanting between December 2018 to March 2019

14. From: John Tippett-Cooper
To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport

At January 2018, Merton had 22 homes which had been empty for more than 10 years. How many are still empty and what steps have they taken to ensure these are brought back into use? Note: Data Sourced from Answer to Public Question 24 at Council meeting on 4.7.2018

Reply

The Council has no legal requirement to have an Empty Homes Strategy and a dedicated resource to deal with such dwellings is not available.

Where officers receive complaints regarding named dwellings they will respond on a reactive basis, providing the owners with appropriate advice and assistance in helping them get their homes back into use. Currently records obtained from Council Tax suggest there are 26 Empty Homes which have been vacant for more than 10 years.

15. From: Philip Ling
To the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance

Over the last five years, how many instances have there been where confidential data held by the Borough has been lost to cyber-attacks? What steps has Merton

taken to notify residents affected by this and what steps have been taken to prevent any future such loss?

Reply

Firstly, I can confirm that the Council already has very robust cyber security arrangements and measures in place to ensure the security of its information, and having checked the data security log I can confirm that no confidential data has been lost to any cyber-security attacks over the last five years.

Therefore, and on that basis no specific additional steps have needed to be implemented to prevent any future loss of information but the Council continues to monitor and develop its cyber security arrangements in accordance with central government guidance and industry best practice.

16. From: Richard Shillito To the Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Cleanliness

What steps is the Council taking to provide public water fountains (apart from that at the Mitcham Clock Tower) both on its own land and with partner agencies

Reply

The Mayor of London is proposing a roll out of new water fountains for the public to refill water bottles. The Mayor's current strategy favours central London locations with high footfall including train stations and west end shopping locations. 4 have been installed with a further 16 to be rolled out in central London.

We will continue to explore funding and bidding opportunities to provide drinking water fountains or facilities in town centres and around transport stations working with partner agencies and the Mayor of London. We have also sought clarification on whether the water bills and maintenance of the fountains would be an ongoing revenue burden on Merton tax payers which is a matter we need to be mindful of in the current financial climate.

The Council's Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel will, this year be setting up a task group looking at ways to reduce single-use plastics in Merton. The Council also supports Sustainable Merton's 'plastic-free-Merton initiative and we encourage all of Merton's businesses to join Thames' Water's refill campaign. We believe there are also a lot of more localised measures that will achieve the same objective such as Thames Water's refill scheme.

Many businesses in Merton's high streets and town centres are already signed up to Thames Water's 're-fill' scheme where residents can re-fill water bottles free of

charge at certain businesses. We would encourage more to sign up to this excellent initiative. www.refill.org.uk/refill-scheme/london/

17. From: Phillipa Zielfa Maslin
To The Cabinet Member for Community and Culture

Many residents welcome the cancellation of the Diynamic festival and hope that the Eastern Electrics festival never returns. Please could Council explain exactly how the views of residents will feed into the process of deciding whether or not the already advertised 2019 Eastern Electrics festival goes ahead?

Reply

Council officers are aware of the scope and content of the views expressed by local residents about the 2018 Eastern Electrics Festival and will share these with the event producers who will do likewise with the comments and enquiries that they received directly via their resident's hotline. These will be considered and discussed at the event de-brief sessions that are underway involving key Council officers and other relevant agencies, including the police and other emergency services.

The Eastern Electrics event producers have not yet formally applied for an event licence for Morden Park in 2019, but should that occur, residents will have an opportunity to express their views via the formal licensing process.

Officers will, nevertheless, expect and ensure that suitably improved and robust measures are included within their event management plans to deal with the avoidable issues identified during the 2018 event should such an application be received.

18. From: Chris Stanton
To the Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Cleanliness

Are Veolia's roadsweepers and idverde's staff required to recycle waste they pick up from streets and parks respectively?

Under guidelines issued by the Environment Agency all waste collected direct from our pavements and highways cannot be recycled. This is due to the contamination that it they may have picked up directly from the street. To help mitigate this we have installed dual litterbins in our town centre where the recycling material can be disposed of separately from the general waste and in doing so can be recycled.

19. From: Andrew Boyce
To the Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Cleanliness

What performance measures are in place to monitor the performance of the contract managers specifically employed to monitor the performance of outsourced contracts such as Veolia's?

Reply

Following the outsourcing of the waste collection and street cleansing service to Veolia we have established a new clienting team who are responsible for the day to day contract monitoring and compliance at a borough level. The Neighbourhood Client Team undertake site inspections and work closely with the contractor's Area Managers to ensure that service standards are maintained and any rectifications are addressed in line with our contractual agreements. They also undertake visits and walk-about with local ward Members who have concerns about littering in their area in order to address the issues in a proactive manner.

In order to hold the contractor to account there are a series of 'Service Performance Indicators' (SPI) which are used to measure the level of performance against an agreed criteria and service standards.

This is further supported by the South London Waste Partnership who monitor the contractor performance, specifically those necessary at pan-borough level.

20. From: Richard Szmidt

To the Cabinet Member for Community and Culture

Given the extreme noise and anti social behaviour suffered by the residents of Lower Morden Lane due to this year's Eastern Electric Festival what measures are being taken to prevent a recurrence in subsequent years?

Reply

The observations and findings of the Council officers and other key agencies who attended or were directly or indirectly involved in the Eastern Electrics event will be shared with the event producers in order for them to better understand the scope, scale and location of the anti-social behaviour issues that were experienced during their 2018 event.

Council officers will expect that the event producers will introduce measures within their event management plan to address and mitigate any such issues, always assuming that they apply to hold the event in Morden Park in 2019. For example, revised and improved stewarding and toilet provisions.

21. From: Vincent Bolt

To the Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Cleanliness

How many Merton staff have been issued with body-worn cameras & for what length of time is the footage from these retained?

Reply

All 32 Parking Civil Enforcement Officers have body worn Cameras plus the 4 Team Leaders. 4 Officers in Environmental Enforcement have recently been issued with cameras. The footage is deleted within 24 hours unless the officer marks it as evidential to be used in an incident. If evidential footage is kept it is stored for as long as needed for example until a case is heard at court.

13 Enforcement staff have been allocated a body worn camera.

**22. From: Nicola Thompson
To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport**

Latest DoT figures indicate that many people are too scared to cycle on the road. What is the council doing to improve conditions for our growing numbers of cyclists and encourage others to swap cars for bikes, especially in the urban town centre areas of Wimbledon and Morden?

Reply

In recent years we have introduced a number of new cycle infrastructure as well as improving existing – some examples include

1. Additional and improved cycle parking throughout the borough
2. Cycle lanes / shared surface e.g. Croydon Road and Beddington Lane
3. Improved permeability through streets and neighbourhoods including removal of obstructions e.g. Fleming Mead Barrier removal linking Quietway link to/from Colliers Wood and Tooting
4. Improving cycling permeability on the Railway path between Raynes Park and Wimbledon by widening pinch points and removing vegetation.
5. Clapham Common to Wimbledon Quietway - Elements include:
 - Providing lighting columns on Wandle Trail between Plough Lane and Borough Boundary with Wandsworth.
 - Construction of shared-use path on the Wandle Meadow and Garfield recreation Ground including lighting.
 - Widening of footbridge across the Wandle Meadow leading to Garfield Recreation Ground.
 - Providing a parallel crossing for cyclist across Haydons Road at junction with South Park Road.
 - Provide lighting on the bridge underpass at Wandle Meadow
 - Creating a Shared-Use Path with lighting between Green Lane Riding Stables and Arthur Road.
 - Improving safety for cyclists at roundabout of Carshalton Road/Croydon Road by widening the path and converting it to shared space around roundabout
 - Construction of speed table with refuge island on Croydon Road opposite Ravensbury pub to assist provide safer crossing for cyclists.

- Provide shared use path on Commonsides West at railway bridge in both directions.

Proposed cycle schemes for this financial year 2018-19 include:

- Pedestrian/cycle phase at the junctions of Croydon Road and Windmill Road.
- Constructing a segregated cycle path between New Malden and Raynes Park alongside railway embankment in partnership with Kingston Council.
- Providing a segregated cycle path on West Barnes Lane between Camberley Avenue and junction with Coombe Lane to provide a safer route into Raynes Park.
- Morden to Sutton Quietway (awaiting scheme approval from TfL)
- Improving capacity of Civic Centre Cycle Parking to help encourage more staff to cycle to work
- Improving Watneys Road to make it more welcoming for cyclists and Pedestrians.
- Providing a short section of cycle track on Ravensbury Park and remove obstructive barrier. Currently there is conflict with pedestrians on the shared path.
- Provide a cycle path with lighting in Morden Park to provide a Quietway link and improve on existing path network within the park.
- Provide secure cycle parking for residents.
- Making improvements on the West bound path of Bushy road in what currently is inadequate for cyclists.
- Making improvements to cyclists/pedestrians on Station Road and Wandle Bank.
- Melrose Ave – improving existing contraflow cycle lane
- New and improved cycle lane along Bushey Road (west bound) between Martin way and Grand Drive
- Figge's Marsh – improvements to existing cycle lane (provision of new segregated cycle facility)
- South Rd / East Rd - Improve existing junction to facilitate cycle access

As well as physical measures we provide cycle training. Bikeability cycle training is provided to primary, secondary and adults at beginner, improver and commuter levels. Scooter training is a popular pre-cursor to cycle training as it develops balance skills as progression to cycle training. Cycle training for adults increased by 6% in 2017 and numbers in the group training sessions at weekends have also increased.

The Council will work with TfL and neighbouring boroughs to bring forward a borough-wide dock-less cycle scheme possibly, including a trial of e-bikes, to recognise potential barriers posed by longer travel distances in outer London.

**23. From: Emily Robertson
To the Cabinet Member for Education**

How is the council proposing to allocate school funding over the next three years given the government's extension to phasing in the new national funding formula?

Reply

The Local Authority has a statutory duty to consult schools on the formula it uses to allocate funding to schools. Merton will continue to consult all schools, academies and the schools forum every year on whether they want to use the local or national funding formula values to allocate school funding.

**24. From: Rachel Waitt
To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport**

In answer to a Public Question (27) at the Council meeting on 4.7.2018 the Cabinet Member for Regeneration Housing and Transport said that Merantun Developments will be policy compliant with regards to affordable housing provision. What directions have been given to the Board of Merantun Developments to ensure this?

Reply

Merantun Development Company will develop sites subject to bringing forward satisfactory Planning Applications and being granted planning permission. The planning policies that apply to Merantun are the ones that apply to all developers and planning applicants and as such they will be required to submit applications that meet the Councils planning policies on all matters including affordable housing. The Board of Merantun Development Company are aware of this and no specific directions have been needed or provided.

**25. From: Emma Maddison
To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport**

What steps is the council taking to ensure that baby changing facilities across the borough are available to parents of both genders and are not confined just to the Ladies toilets?

Reply

The Building Regulations do not specify an absolute requirement for unisex changing facilities for babies. However, they are encouraged and the Council also encourages developers/designers to provide unisex changing facilities in all cases of new development and also in any retrofit developments where possible. We shall continue to encourage this and use what limited powers we have.