

From Councillor Mark Kenny to Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health

Can the Cabinet Member outline what measures the council is taking to improve air quality around our schools?

Reply

In 2018 Merton published its new Air Quality Action Plan 2018 – 2023 (AQAP) the plan is split into 9 separate themes and contains some 70 action points, there is a specific schools theme titled 'Our Schools' (Action Point 65 – 70 below).

- Maintain our ongoing commitment to school travel plans and the STARS (Sustainable Travel: Active, Responsible, Safe), review.
- Carry out audits of schools in the most polluted areas of the borough and help provide a scheme of mitigation where necessary and possible. The new programme of school audits will start in April 2019; we will aim to cover at least three schools a year.
- Review and assess annually the necessity for audits at schools and nurseries in areas subject to high levels of pollution.
- Incorporate schools in areas of poor air quality into our monitoring network and regime.
- Joint working arrangements with Public Health partners around schools to deliver joint health benefits.
- Work with and provide specialist advice and support to schools around air quality issues.

Additional actions to the Air Quality Action Plan include:

- We will deliver a number of Anti-Idling campaign events at schools and anti-idling signage is currently being introduced at 20 locations throughout the borough – which includes schools.
- Running additional enforcement of parking outside schools to help reduce pollution and provide a safer environment around schools.
- We are currently working with colleagues in Parking Services to pilot and implement School Streets' initiative, this is where the road outside a school is closed to traffic at school opening and closing times to reduce pollution and increase safety.
- Along with our Public Health colleagues we will be leading in a school's project called the 'School Neighbourhood Approach Pilot - (SNAP)', formerly 'School Superzones'. Colleagues from 3 different directorates; Children, Schools and Families, Environment & Regeneration, and Public Health are collaborating to shape a local 'whole systems' approach to improve the environment in and around a school across four broad themes: The food around us; Moving around; Feeling safe; Spaces and places (includes air quality); and Communications and enablers

From Councillor David Williams to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Cleanliness:

What additional resources have Public Space and Member Enquiries teams had to engage since 1st October 2018 to cope with the extra volume of

complaints/enquiries as a result of the decision to introduce new waste collection and recycling services by Veolia – and at what cost? Additionally how many formal complaints (using the Complaints procedure) have been logged in the same period in respect of these service changes compared with the same period (1st October – 31st January) the previous year?

Reply

In advance of the service change in Oct 2018 we anticipate the need to provide greater resilience in our services and recruited additional resource. This knowledge came from a detailed “lessons learnt” exercise with colleagues from other Boroughs and undertook visits to colleagues in Sutton call centre to ascertain expected workloads and waiting times.

To fund this temporary resource we have set aside £250k to fund this from the underspend in the waste services revenue budget.

Public Space Neighbourhood Client Team – 2 additional officer

Public Space Customer Service officer – 2 additional officers

Communications Support – 1 additional officer

Call Centre - 6 additional call centre staff (this was staggered and reduced over the first 3 months)

Complaints – 2 additional officers.

With reference to the number of complaints received , as expected with any large service change of this scale the service has been required to respond to an increase in the number of waste related complaints. Between Oct 2018 and Jan 2019 we received 729 complaints compared to 347 in the corresponding period the previous year.

From Councillor Anthony Fairclough to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Cleanliness

What impact has the recently introduced charge for the bulky waste service had on fly tipping?

Reply

The chargeable bulky waste service was implemented from the 7th January this year, as such it is too early to analyse the data and identify trends in the take up of this service. With regard to impact on fly tipping, there is little if any correlation between charging for bulky waste and fly tipping. When we introduced the free charge we saw no impact at all and other waste authorities across London report the same position. We do not expect any further increase in fly tipping with this change

From Councillor Joan Henry to Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health

Can the Cabinet Member explain what steps the council is taking to ensure that improving air quality is a priority across the council?

Reply

In 2018 Merton published its new Air Quality Action Plan 2018 – 2023 (AQAP). The plan is split into 9 separate themes and contains some 70 action points. The AQAP was prepared by the Environmental Health Department of Merton Council but with the support and detailed input from Services from across the Council.

This AQAP is subject to an annual review, appraisal of progress and reporting to the relevant Council Committee. Progress is also reviewed by Senior Management and Cabinet Member monthly. It is also the subject of a report at this Council meeting. That report summarises much of the positive work being undertaken including areas where the Council is at the forefront of the air quality agenda and also outlines the next steps and forthcoming actions and progress

From Councillor David Simpson to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Cleanliness:

Can the Cabinet Member give an update to members on the % improvement in air quality in Merton attributed to the Diesel Levy since its introduction in April 2017?

Reply

The Council has been monitoring air quality in the borough for a number of years including using real-time automated monitoring equipment. Every year it publishes an Annual Status Report covering measured air quality within the borough. Pollutant levels are noted to show an overall reduction in Merton over the last seven years.

It is important to understand that air quality across London will only improve over time due to a raft of measures which will impact positively on emissions from road traffic. This will include the move towards less polluting vehicles and Merton, along with many boroughs, will benefit, for example, from the steps it is taking to encourage electric vehicles. The Council's Diesel Levy, along with similar schemes in other boroughs, will assist in achievement of air quality guidance levels in a quicker timeframe.

From Councillor Peter Southgate to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Cleanliness

Allegations have appeared in social media that Veolia has been instructing crews collecting materials for recycling in Brighton to send them for incineration instead.

<https://insidecroydon.com/2019/01/10/binmageddon-veolia-is-sending-recycling-to-incinerator/>

Have any materials collected by Veolia for recycling in Merton been sent for incineration? What safeguards does the council have to ensure household recycling when correctly presented for collection in Merton is in fact recycled?

Reply

I can confirm that no material collected for recycling is sent for incineration. Veolia undertake the collection of our domestic waste following which it is sent for further processing through our disposal contract with Viridor. Under both these contracts all material collected as recycling is required to be segregated from the general waste stream and processed in the most environmentally friendly manner

From Councillor Russell Makin to Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport

What moves is the council making to improve the use of public transport in the borough as a direct way of improving air quality?

Reply

Road transport is believed to contribute about 50-60% of emissions to the total pollution burden in Merton. Of this around 25-30% is due to private vehicles. Therefore, the more members of the public that use public transport the better for air pollutant levels. The move from the private vehicle will also be assisted by improving infrastructure on cycling and walking. The Council is in the process of finalising its draft third Local Implementation Plan (LIP), which sets the course as to how we will meet the Mayor's Transport Strategy and incorporates a number of delivery targets, including targets on car ownership and air quality. The LIP funding of £1.5m for 2019/20 will include a focus on healthier streets and the Healthy Streets/Healthy People initiative sets out to rebalance our streets and environment thereby improving the street environment and promoting healthier lifestyles through more walking and cycling.

Merton Council has achieved increases in public transport accessibility across the borough. This contributes to greater choice in sustainable transport modes. Further details are presented in the response to Question 54.

From Councillor Nick McLean to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Cleanliness:

The recently published Public Health & Air Quality report states that where public transport is less accessible, then there is a corresponding increased reliance on private car use. Therefore, can the Cabinet Member explain why there has not been a greater focus on improving the public transport infrastructure in the East of the Borough?

Reply

Over the last two decades there has been a sustained and concerted focus on improving public transport and sustainable transport choices in the east of the borough as part of the Council's cross party commitment to bridging the gap.

- **2000** saw the opening of **London Tramlink** which refurbished Mitcham and Mitcham Junction stations as well as proving two new stations at Belgrave Walk and Phipps Bridge. The new stations opened up access to Phipps Bridge and also made access to jobs easier for our residents there.
- **2008** saw the long awaited opening of **Mitcham Eastfields Station**. The first new station in suburban London since the 1940s. Mitcham Eastfields provides

8 trains per hour with journey times of 19 minute to London Victoria. Services also connect Mitcham directly to Blackfriars, St Pancras, Luton Airport, Wimbledon, Sutton and Epsom.

- **2018** saw the completion of **Rediscover Mitcham** which not only created a step-change in the quality of the public realm, but sought to improve bus journey times, frequency and reliability by un-tangling the bus routes from general traffic. The impact of the bus-only street in London Rd is that bus services are now more reliable, faster and interchange between services is easier.
- **2018** Rediscover Mitcham has also provided segregated cycle lanes through the town to create a more efficient and pleasant environment for cyclists. The council and TFL have also invested in **Croydon Road and Beddington Lane** segregated cycle lanes to improve the cross-borough cycle network and connect public transport nodes.
- **2018 Sutton Link.** We have worked in partnership with TFL and LB Sutton to move forward options for the Sutton tram or bur rapid-transit which would increase connectivity in the south-eastern wards.

Transport investment in Merton is clearly demonstrable when comparing the 2012 TFL PTAL Map with the current and forecast one.

PTAL (Public Transport Accessibility Levels) in Merton have increased at Mitcham Eastfields [then 2 now 4], Wimbledon Chase [then 2 now 3] and St Helier [then 2 now 3] due to the Thameslink upgrades and Mitcham Town Centre, bus lane [then 4 now 5] other increases in PTAL occur in Figges Marsh, Streatham Rd, Tooting Station and Colliers Wood.

<https://tfl.gov.uk/info-for/urban-planning-and-construction/planning-with-webcat/webcat>

From Councillor Carl Quilliam to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Cleanliness

Will the Cabinet Member agree to publish the air quality monitoring data for the site around the Beddington Energy Recovery Facility on Merton Council's website? And if so, by when?

Reply

This was also subject of Public Question 37. The Energy Reclamation Facility is closely regulated by the Environment Agency (EA) and stack emissions are continuously monitored and reported to the EA in 'real-time'. In theory the stack emissions should not negatively impact the borough. The Environmental Impact Assessment identified pollution from associated traffic as the potential risk from the facility.

Sutton Council has two continuous air quality monitoring stations near the facility which provide data to the London Air Quality Network, a public site openly accessible. (www.londonair.org.uk)

Officers from Merton have identified this facility as a new potential source of pollution in the borough and declared this in our Annual Status Report, so that it will then need to be considered by officers as part of the annual air quality review process.

Officers are also working with colleagues in Sutton Council through the South London Air Quality Cluster Group to discuss and review these cross-border concerns.

It is simply too early to tell but officers are confident in the control measures associated with the facility.

Locations of monitors.

- ST5) Beddington Lane North at Junction of Brookmead Road & Beddington Lane, Sutton. Species Monitored: Nitrogen Dioxide and PM10, PM2.5 Particulates (more details [here](#))
- (ST8) Beddington Lane at Prologis Park, 140-142 Beddington Lane.

From Councillor Ed Gretton to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Cleanliness:

When exactly will the Council publish the full year 2018 Air Quality Annual Status Report for our Borough?

Reply

The Council is required to submit its Annual Status Report for approval to our governing body for air quality – the Greater London Authority. The Council's then publishes the report each year after the GLA has had the opportunity to comment and all data from automated equipment has been ratified. This process usually takes a few months into each calendar year but the Council will, again, publish the Report as early as it can and once other responders have fed back to Council officers.

From Councillor Thomas Barlow to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Cleanliness:

Can the Cabinet Member outline the physical method of refuse and recycling waste collection used by their contractor Veolia?

Reply

Our waste collection contractor has introduced a harmonised waste collection service across the Partnership boroughs. In October 2018 we introduced a new wheelie bin collection service.

I am pleased to advise that Households continue to receive weekly collections, with two collections (food and recycling) one week and three collections (food, recycling and general waste) on alternate weeks.

Each household has been provided with one wheelie bin for non-recyclable household waste along with a wheelie bin for paper and card; they continue to use their existing recycling box for plastics, glass and cans.

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The new service has maintained the curtilage collection approach rather than introduce a kerbside collection system. This is to ensure that our pavements are kept clear of refuse containers restricting access for pushchair / wheelchair users. This requires householders to set out waste bins within the confines of their property as close to the edge as possible. As part of our monitoring process and to ensure high collection standards are maintained, the waste crews will be required to return containers back to the curtilage of properties.

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