

APPENDIX C

OFFICER RESPONSE TO THE CALL REQUESTS – PUBLIC HEALTH, AIR QUALITY AND SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT – A STRATEGIC APPROACH TO PARKING CHARGES

Required by part 4E Section 16(c)(a)(ii) of the constitution:

With regards to paras 2(a), (e) and (f):

The logic of the administration’s proposals is that they will “deliver reduced car ownership and usage across the borough” – that’s the mechanism by which these proposals are supposed to lead to less air pollution.

As noted at the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel on 27 June:

- *No modelling has been carried out in relation to how many vehicles people will give up, nor how many fewer car trips there might be, as a result of these proposals. Nor the ratio between the two.*
- *No specific evidence has been presented to cabinet that increases in residents’ parking charges result in reduced car ownership.*
- *There was an indication at Scrutiny that there was no specific evidence with regards to the effectiveness of the pricing model chosen.*

Alternative courses of action have not been sufficiently identified and examined. This is highlighted by the fact that the administration itself has a review into the diesel levy and emissions based charges outstanding, and that the air quality action plan recommends emissions based charging.

Officer response

The November 2018, December 2018, January 2019 and July 2019 Cabinet reports set out the Public Health, Air Quality and sustainable Transport – a strategic approach to parking charges which set out the proposals in detail, specifically the contribution appropriate tariffs can make in contributing to the objectives.

The key evidence can be found at:

July 2019

<https://democracy.merton.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=146&MIId=3396&Ver=4>

January 2019

<https://democracy.merton.gov.uk/documents/s26251/Reference%20from%20scrutiny%20-%20strategic%20approach%20to%20parking%20charges.pdf>

December 2018,

<https://democracy.merton.gov.uk/documents/s25841/Emmissions%20public%20health%20and%20air%20quality%20a%20review%20of%20parking%20charges%202%20002.pdf>

November 2018,

<https://democracy.merton.gov.uk/documents/s25352/Emmissions%20public%20health%20and%20air%20quality%20a%20review%20of%20parking%20charges%20v6.pdf>

These reports set out the key policy drivers and implementation plan to meet key objectives such as reduced air quality.

The council's 'Public health, air quality and sustainable transport – a strategic approach to parking charges' report sits alongside the councils Air Quality Action Plan (attached as Appendix C2) which lists over 70 key actions within the Borough to reduce harmful emissions.

The July 2019 Cabinet report talked to a number of key themes that had been highlighted in the consultation, one of which was parking demand and supply and how charging levels nudge motorists behaviours.

A number of comments and feedback suggested that there was no evidence to demonstrate that raising parking charges would reduce car use and lead to improved air quality. The council believes that there is evidence to show that the level of parking charges is likely to stimulate or nudge people into reducing car usage or removing their reliance on needing a car altogether.

The Canadian Parking Association produced a paper in 2015 titled The Value of Parking that looked at examples from a number of countries. This covers a wide range of points relating to the elasticity of demand for parking and the impact of fees on parking behaviour. The paper is available to read online at <https://canadianparking.ca/the-value-of-parking/>

Key points from this paper include:

“The importance of parking is widely recognised, but car drivers are reluctant to pay even a small amount of money for parking.”

Parking fees are an efficient way of regulating parking. Offering free parking will lead to undesirable effects. The pivotal point in this is the low elasticity of parking demand. Even though parking demand in general is inelastic (meaning that the percentage change in parking demand will be smaller than the percentage change in parking fees) there is still an unequivocal link that increased charges will lead to a reduced demand, even if this is not proportional.

Previous reports on price have tended to concentrate on commuter parking only, which has a higher rate of inelasticity. Only a minority of people who use commuter parking facilities would consider alternative forms of transport or not making the trip at all.

The report goes on to explain that there is also a difference in price elasticity between short and long-term effects. Car owners can adapt their long-term behaviour more easily than changing their habits on short-term notice. Long-term effects then can be more elastic than short term effects.

The report demonstrates that price elasticity for parking demand is strongly connected to the value that the car driver puts on certain types of trips (cross elasticity). Highly valued trips will still take place, even when the price is high (low elasticity). When the value of a trip is considered lower, a driver may sooner skip the trip or find another solution (higher elasticity). Trips for dining out, recreation and unplanned shopping are likely to benefit from the nudge effect of stimulating drivers to change or amend their behaviours. Emergency trips, by their very nature, are unexpected and likely to account for a small number of overall trips made each day.

Further examples of where increased charges have stimulated direct behavioural change include:

London Congestion charge – The congestion charge was the first of its kind in the world. There was no evidence to prove that it would be effective prior to its introduction, however its value and effectiveness have been scrutinised since. We know that in the first six months of operation of the charge, 60,000 less vehicle movements were recorded.

ULEZ – Since February 2017, when the Mayor announced the introduction of the T charge as a stepping stone for the ULEZ, there has been a reduction in the total number of vehicles seen in the Central London ULEZ Zone (around 11,000 fewer vehicles per day)

This latter point is illustrated in the following example where price increases led to a change in behaviour:

*Congestion charge in **central Stockholm** – Findings indicate that the congestion tax in central Stockholm reduced ambient air pollution by 5 to 10 percent. This policy-induced change in pollution has been associated with a significant reduction in the rate of urgent care visits for asthma among children 0 to 5 years of age. Our estimates show that permanent reductions in air pollution from automobiles, even in locations, which have average pollution levels well below the current EPA standards, can have significant positive effects on children's respiratory health.*

Emilia Simeonova & Janet Currie & Peter Nilsson & Reed Walker, 2018. "Congestion Pricing, Air Pollution and Children's Health," NBER Working Papers 24410, National Bureau of Economic Research, Inc.

Parking Fees an Economic Perspective – A further paper on the impact of parking charges and behaviour

<http://www.sciedu.ca/journal/index.php/ijba/article/viewFile/6626/3948> talks about the complementary relationship between vehicle parking, increases in parking fees and their proportionality in controlling vehicle growth rates and demand.

Key points include:

Increased parking fees will lead to the desire to reduce private car travel, prompting people to choose alternative forms of travel

If travellers expect higher parking fees they will change their route, or use other means of transport to reach their destinations.

‘Benefits of Parking Management in London August 2018’.

<https://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/node/34485>

A comprehensive 2018 policy report by London Councils ‘**Benefits of Parking Management** in London August 2018’ addressed many of these key principles. <https://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/node/34485> The report stated that:

Parking management is the only mechanism through which local authorities can ensure stationary vehicles are parked in an amenable and equitable manner, thus solidifying its importance and the benefit it delivers.

There are many parking management benefits, which include reducing congestion, improving air quality, providing funding for parking and wider transport scheme improvements and ensuring good access and accessibility.

Of particular significance is the fact that these benefits deliver benefit to everybody, from motorists themselves to the person sat at home, and all road users and non-road users in between.

As part of the information provided during the consultation period, residents, business associations, visitors, resident associations and organisations were directed to a proposed list of measures of success that the council could consider using for the future.

Ultimately, the outcome the council is aiming for, is improved health and wellbeing of our residents, visitors and those who work in the borough. We know this will take time and effort from many other organisations. Merton are however committed to do what we can. There are some things we can measure to make sure we focus on developing a more sustainable transport strategy over the coming years, which include:

- Reduction in congested areas of our high streets
- Reduction in CPZs / permits issued, including visitor permits, including:
- Reduction in multiple permits sold to the same house
- Reduction in the number of season tickets sold
- Investment in infrastructure and sustainable transport solutions:
- Number of additional electric charging bays
- Number of additional cycle routes
- Number of additional cycle parking facilities
- Greater use of public transport journeys within the borough
- Increase in the number of 'active transport' activity in the borough:
- Number of walking journeys in the borough
- Number of cycling journeys in the borough

It is anticipated that these measures will be used over the coming years to determine the success and levels of the councils parking charging policy and how this contributes to less air pollution.

Public health:

Along with air quality a key objective is to contribute towards improved public health of Merton and London's residents. There are many factors beyond our control but we are committed to working with colleagues in Public Health and shall monitor progress.

Alternative options have been reviewed and the Council has committed reviewing the impact of its existing diesel levy and for future emissions based charging within Merton. The report will be presented to Cabinet later this year.

With regards to para 2(c):

As noted at the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel on 27 June:

- *No equality groups have been directly consulted with, with regards to the proposals or the mitigation measures set out in the 3 Equality Assessments. This seems contrary to the Equality Assessment Flowchart, which requires officers to "Consult appropriate stakeholders as part of the review" when they are carrying out the review under qu 8 "Draw up a list of areas of concern. Review ways to remove or minimise the negative impact/discrimination".*

Officer response

On the matter of directly consulting with equality groups, the list below shows the organisations that were directly contacted at the start of the consultation in March 2019 seeking their views.

- Wimbledon Guild - info@wimbledonguild.co.uk
- Age UK Merton.- info@ageukmerton.org.uk
- Polish Family Organisation - slawek.szczepanski@polishfamily.co.uk
- BAME voice - info@bamevoice.org
- Carers Support Merton info@csmerton.org
- Ethnic Minority Centre ethnicminority@btconnect.com
- Mitcham and Morden Guild mandmguild@aol.com
- Merton CIL info@mertoncil.org.uk
- Merton Seniors Forum mertonseniorsforum@hotmail.co.uk

In addition, a copy of the consultation documentation was also sent to Merton Voluntary Sector Compact (MVSC) who in themselves have direct links to over 800 voluntary groups and organisations in Merton.

A copy of the consultation documentation sent out to the above equality groups is attached as Appendix C5

The councils consultation website and the links sent to the relevant equality groups all included hyperlinks to the Cabinet – Public health, air quality and sustainable transport strategic approach to parking charges report in December 2108.

As well as the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny in January 2019, all of which have the link to the relevant EIA's to allow individuals and groups to comment on the proposed mitigations and action plans as drafted at that point in time. <https://democracy.merton.gov.uk/documents/s26073/Appendix%208%20-%20Equality%20Analysis%20for%20public%20health%20and%20air%20quality.pdf>

Following an analysis of all the responses received the EIA for the Public health, air quality and sustainable transport-a strategic approach to parking charges report, was updated to reflect the feedback from the consultation in advance of the June Scrutiny meeting and Cabinet on the 15th July 2019.

<https://democracy.merton.gov.uk/documents/s28668/Revised%20Equalities%20Impact%20Assessment%20v%20june%202019%20v3.pdf>

A copy of the “public health, air quality and sustainable transport – a strategic approach to parking charges” equalities impact assessment is attached as Appendix A2 to this report. The EIA sets out the overarching aims objectives and desired outcome of the proposal and their contribution to the council's corporate priorities. It also includes a detailed background on who will be effected by this proposal and the evidence the council has considered as part of its assessment.

The Council received no responses to its consultation from any of the above organisations representing equality groups.

The council also believes that in accordance with the equality assessment flow chart, the above referenced/linked documentation, and the references contained in the minutes of the Cabinet meeting 15th July 2019, (as set out below) that the council has met its requirement to “draw up a list of areas of concern. Review ways to remove or minimise negative impact/discrimination.”

Extract from the minutes of the Cabinet meeting 15th July 2019.

<https://democracy.merton.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=12748>

The Cabinet Member went on to address the points made in the Scrutiny reference report. In relation to transport accessibility, officers were currently talking to TfL on improving step free access across the borough, which the Cabinet Member for Equalities had raised as one of her priorities at the Council meeting on 10 July. The most recent Residents' Survey had showed that residents do rate the current public transport provision in the Borough.

In respect of the impact on the elderly, the Cabinet Member drew the Cabinet's attention to the comprehensive Equality Impact Assessment which had been undertaken. He and the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport had asked officers to look at work being done by other boroughs on this issue. There were currently a range of measures to address and this would continue to be kept under review should the proposals be agreed.

At the invitation of the Chair, the Director of Environment and Regeneration reminded Members of their Public Sector Equality Duty, that all public bodies must prevent discrimination and have due regard to the need to consider and apply fairness and equality in carrying out their functions, particularly when making decisions or formulating policy. He drew Members attention to the updated Equality Impact Assessment (EIA), which had been circulated in advance of the meeting, which contained an analysis of the impact of the proposals on those with protected characteristics under the Equalities Act following a comprehensive consultation process.

The EIA demonstrated both positive, in terms of improved air quality and public health, and negative impacts to some groups in particular those with a disability, socio-economic and pregnancy and maternity. However in light of the mitigation measures set out in the EIA, the impact was assessed to be low and proportionate to the legitimate aim of the policy. Although the EIA had not identified a potential negative impact on the elderly, it was acknowledged that elderly people were more likely to have mobility issues and the EIA referred to mitigation measures already in place or planned.

The Director drew the Cabinet's attention to the Improvement Plan at section 5 of the EIA which set out actions and timescales proposed to be undertaken, including arrangements for free parking for Blue Badge holders in certain bays, dedicated disabled bays and free carer permits. Although residents over 60 qualified for free public transport, it was acknowledged that some of the stations in the Borough were not step free and this was also identified as an issue in the pregnancy and maternity category. Therefore, the Council would continue to lobby both Network Rail and TfL for improvements (1).

It should be noted that the proposals were complimentary to a number of measures already either underway or planned and if approved, the policy would be kept under review and representatives of the affected groups would be consulted with to assess ongoing impact and consider further mitigation. Adjustments would be brought forward for Members' consideration as appropriate.

(1) The extract below has been taken from a recent letter sent by the Leader of the Council to the Mayor of London attached as Appendix C4.

In addition, whilst we are encouraging residents to give up their cars we need to be more confident that there will be safe and accessible public transport options available. The lack of step free access at some of our busy train stations, particularly Raynes Park and Motspur Park, is a cause for concern, and any action you could take to expedite step action here would be appreciated.

TfL supported us in our unsuccessful bid earlier this year to the Department for Transport for Access for all monies and I would like to seek your support for future bids or alternate funds that we can sue to provide step free access to all public transport across the borough.

The Council acknowledges that, where possible, convenient parking should be provided for residents to enable them to park near their homes, where practicable, and parking provision is also necessary to meet the needs of people who have no other alternative other than to use their vehicle e.g. individuals with disabilities.

A number of key factors were considered in the review of on and off-street parking and permits, which included:

- (i) Ease of access to public transport (PTAL)
- (ii) Air Quality hotspots
- (iii) Areas of high congestion
- (iv) Enforcement requirements

This evidence was considered in light of the Merton profile detailed in section 3 of the EIA attached as Appendix A.

In order to fully understand how the proposals would affect users and residents, the Council undertook a comprehensive consultation exercise to gain the views of residents and stakeholders. This enabled the Council to make informed decisions and to develop the proposed policies.

Merton is committed to undertaking comprehensive consultation to gain the views of residents and stakeholders. This enables the Council to make informed decisions and to develop our policies.

The Parking Charges consultation commenced on Friday 29th March and ended Sunday 5th May 2019. As this consultation formed part of a statutory consultation process, there were a number of legal obligations, as well as a commitment to bringing the proposals to as wide an audience as possible.

To ensure the council could generate as much feedback as possible, representations were invited in writing via the web page, or by email to a dedicated email box. In addition, an online survey was available which asked prescribed questions and tick box responses, which were recorded. Circa 3,000 representations were received. Due to the number of responses received, the council extended its review period to the 18th June 2019. This ensured that full consideration was given

to all representations, and to allow any further comments from the resident and business associations to be included.

The Council published a 2-page feature article in My Merton, which was delivered to every household within the borough in March/April 2019 to align with the consultation period. As well as the online consultation and the My Merton article the council also attended Community Forum meetings during the period of the consultation; followed the statutory Traffic Management Order process of displaying notices in roads within all of the CPZ areas, on pay, display machines, and in all council owned car parks, in addition a statutory notice was placed in the newspaper.

Copies of all proposals and background papers were made available on deposit at all libraries and at the Civic Centre for public inspection/reference. We consulted with statutory and non-statutory consultees. On the council's home page, we displayed a link to the consultation web pages. The web pages gave full details of the proposal along with background papers and reports. The pages also included a section, which aimed to address frequently asked questions.

A number of statutory bodies were consulted as part of the Traffic Management Order making process. The only response received was from the Metropolitan Police who raised no objections.

The Council believes that it has consulted with appropriate stakeholders as part of the review. Details of the consultation process used was set out in section 10 of the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny report 27 June 2019.

In addition, an online survey was available which asked prescribed questions and tick box responses, which were recorded.

Circa 3,000 representations were received. To put this in context the council currently issues circa 20,000 Permits per year and over 150,000 visitor permits per year.

Information and instructions on how to access the consultation was also sent to 600 plus residents and organisations who have previously declared they wish to be informed of consultations and matters which may be of interest.

A number of statutory bodies were consulted as part of the Traffic Management Order making process. The only response received was from the Metropolitan Police who raised no objections.

- *From conversations with officers concerning the equality assessments, there is an indication that part of Equality Assessment 2 (presented to the Scrutiny Panel) has been changed to better reflect officers' views on the areas of concern, but this may have changed the emphasis of the risks as far as councillors are concerned.*

Officer response

The emerging EIA documentation has been to a number of committees.

Cabinet December 2019, Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel 9th January 2019, Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel 27th June, Cabinet 15th July 2019

We acknowledge that the call in response recognises that the EIA has evolved and been updated, to include the feedback from the consultation responses, over the development of the proposals as set out below.

The councils consultation website and the links sent to the relevant equality groups all included hyperlinks to the Cabinet - Public health, air quality and sustainable transport strategic approach to parking charges report in December 2108.

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<https://democracy.merton.gov.uk/documents/s28668/Revised%20Equalities%20Impact%20Assessment%20v%20june%202019%20v3.pdf>

Required by part 4E Section 16(c)(a)(ii) of the constitution:

- *We – the signatories – are in favour of air quality measures that will have a proven ability to reduce the levels of harmful emission in Merton.*

Officer response

The Council is pleased that the signatories are in favour of supporting measures to tackle air quality in the borough. Air quality is a priority for Merton as with many other council's in London, therefore we must be taking all of the actions we have within our powers to tackle this problem, something that is not only a legal duty, but a moral duty to protect the health of our citizens.

In 2018 the Council produced a new Air Quality Action Plan for the next 5 years, this outlined the steps we will take to contribute to tackling this public health crisis. This is attached as Appendix C2

This Action Plan has been warmly welcomed and considered one of the most progressive in London, it also leads the way on many initiatives. There are 70 actions in the Plan these cover all of the areas within our control to deal with this serious problem.

It is important to note that the statutory responsibility allied to this agenda is something we can be challenged on, and judged by our actions. In the same way Central Government has been challenged by Client Earth in recent years.

The consideration and use of parking charges was one of the many measures proposed in the Action Plan..

In 2018 The GLA (London governing body for Air Quality) produced a list of measures that Local Authorities should take to tackle poor air quality. This list of 25 measures were all covered and supported in Merton's Air Quality Action Plan.

One measure considered as a 'High Priority' and 'High Benefit' is the use of parking policy to reduce pollution emissions.

Merton is one the increasing number of Councils that are prepared to be bold and use all of the controls open to use to tackle air pollution and as such we cannot dismiss a measure that is considered as High Priority and High Benefit.

Merton is not prepared to ignore its responsibilities to deliver cleaner local air at a time when the current situation has been described as a public health emergency.

The Council recognises the part that it has to play in developing and delivering a framework to tackle air quality, demand for parking, and congestion in the borough. It does not stand alone on these issues. All of the other London boroughs are seeking to implement new parking policies to tackle similar problems.

There are very few direct levers available to stimulate a change in driver behaviour, and the council believes that the rationale for setting the new

parking charges is about giving people the right nudge and opportunity to make different choices.

From November 2018 through to July 2019, Cabinet considered and agreed a series of reports setting out its approach to Public Health, air quality and sustainable transport – a strategic approach to parking charges. These reports set out the key strategic drivers that will affect parking policy for the future.

Then, and now, Members are requested to exercise their statutory duty to secure the expeditious, convenient and safe movement of traffic, and the provision of suitable and adequate parking facilities in the context of the public health agenda. This includes the shift to more active and sustainable transport modes (such as walking, cycling and public transport) the impact of vehicle emissions and congestion on air quality, and demand for kerbside space, which form the backdrop of the policy direction.

This report supports the previous rationale of seeking to adjust driver behaviour and to ensure that we can provide a modern, efficient and environmentally sustainable transport policy for residents, visitors and businesses, now and in the future.

The report explains the Public Health vision to protect and improve physical and mental health outcomes for the whole population in Merton, and to reduce health inequalities. At the heart of the strategy is the concept that the environment is a key driver for health. It can be summarised by 'making the healthy choice the easy choice'.

In setting out its measures of success, the new charging policy aims to deliver reduced car ownership and usage across the borough, encourage more people to undertake alternative forms of active travel, purchase fewer resident permits and lead to a rebalancing of our streets - to benefit residents and businesses alike.

The essence of the public health argument for the proposed changes to parking charges are that they will encourage less car use, which in turn reduces two major risks to health: air pollution and sedentary behaviour.

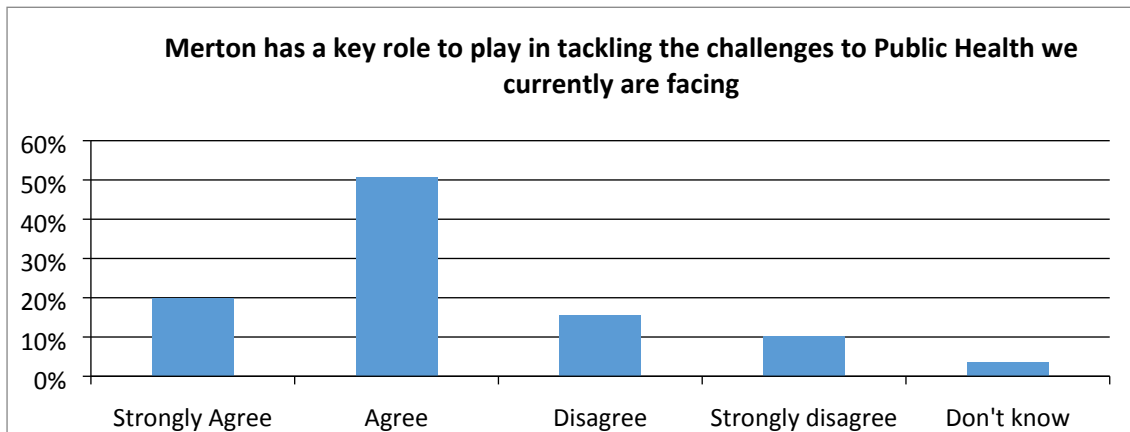
The benefits to health of these reductions in health risks were detailed in the last report to Cabinet. In summary these are:

- Less air pollution. Poor air quality causes respiratory and cardiovascular disease, and the latest evidence shows effects on the brain hastening dementia and cognitive impairment in children.
- Less sedentary behaviour. From a public health point of view, there is a strong argument for urgent and substantial action. Diabetes in Merton is increasing by about 2% per year, and it is estimated that 90% of new cases are potentially preventable. One in five children entering reception are currently overweight or obese, a figure which increases to one in three

leaving primary school in Year 6. Almost 60% of Merton adults are overweight.

- **Healthy places:** The 'healthy streets' approach defines a healthy street as one with things to see and do; places to stop and rest; shade and shelter; clean air; and pedestrians from all walks of life. Parking policy has its part to play alongside changes to the built environment to create healthy streets

The graph below is the response from the recent consultation specifically asking if Merton has a key role to play in tackling the challenges to public health we are currently facing. (Merton has a key role to play in tackling the challenges to Public Health we currently are facing).



It is clear from the response shown that over 70% of respondents agree/strongly agree that the Council has a key role to play in tackling the challenges to public health.

Parking policy has the potential to shape and define public health benefits. Improving air quality is important because 6.5% of mortality in Merton is attributable to poor air quality.

<https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/search/air%20pollution#page/0/gid/1/pat/6/par/E12000007/ati/101/are/E09000002/iid/30101/age/230/sex/4>

We know that over 9,000 Londoners die a premature death through poor air quality. This issue has risen significantly in prominence and importance where hardly a day goes by without a new article or scheme being proposed. Councils up and down the land are seeking new and bold solutions to what is a huge challenge.

The Mayor for London Sadiq Khan has rightfully placed growth, healthy people and places as the central theme of his adopted Transport Strategy. Merton Council is supportive of the strategy and in particular the adoption of healthy streets indicators when designing public realm improvements to make London's streets healthier places where people can be encouraged to choose walking and cycling as their choice of travel.

The Merton parking service already actively contributes to; and helps deliver the key policies set out in: Merton's Health and Wellbeing Strategy; Merton's Air

Quality Action Plan; the Council's Local Implementation Plan; delivering the Governments' carbon reduction targets and the Mayor of London's Transport Strategy.

The London Borough of Merton historically and presently, continues to exceed targets and its legal objectives for local air pollution, including Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂). The Government, local authorities and policy makers are being continuously challenged around delivering their responsibilities to reduce pollution, and are often criticised for lack of action or being slow to respond.

Air quality has been identified as a priority both nationally and within London, where pollution levels continue to exceed both EU limit values and UK air quality standards. Pollution concentrations in Merton continue to breach the legally binding air quality limits for both Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) and Particulate Matter (PM₁₀). The air quality-monitoring network, run by Merton, has shown that the UK annual mean NO₂ objective (40µg/m³) continues to be breached at a number of locations across the borough including Colliers Wood, Morden, Tooting and South Wimbledon. In some locations, the NO₂ concentration is also in excess of the UK 1-hour air quality objective, which indicates a risk not only to people living in that area but also for those working or visiting the area. Reducing vehicle numbers (car usage) and different types of vehicle has a direct and tangible benefit on air quality.

In Merton, an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) has been declared for the whole borough with four locations identified as having high levels of pollution and human exposure. These are in the main centres of Mitcham, Morden, Raynes Park and Wimbledon.

Poor air quality in Merton comes from a number of sources, but our legal exceedances are almost entirely due to road transport. Road transport accounts for approximately 60% of emissions of NO₂ in our borough. Simply put, this is due to traffic including the nature of vehicles on our roads, the volume of vehicles and the number of trips that they take.

- *This decision to increase the cost of CPZ permits has not been an open decision informed by evidence, but one taken behind closed doors, without proper scrutiny, and without any consideration of the alternatives.*

Officer response

The table below sets out a comprehensive timetable of open meetings where appropriate scrutiny of the public health, air quality and sustainable transport a strategic approach to parking charges, has been carried out.

A section entitled alternatives and options was included in every report.

Notwithstanding the above, a full public consultation was carried out through March to June 2019. A copy of the consultation and proposals was sent to every resident in Merton via *My Merton*. Residents, businesses, residents associations and organisations were encouraged to submit their ideas and views to inform the decision making process.

Meeting & Date	Link
Cabinet 12th November 2018	https://democracy.merton.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=146&MId=3085&Ver=4
Cabinet. 19 th December 18	https://democracy.merton.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=146&MId=3086&Ver=4
Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel 9 th January 2019	https://democracy.merton.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=157&MId=3155&Ver=4
Cabinet 14 th January 2019	https://democracy.merton.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=146&MId=3087&Ver=4
Public consultation period	March to June 2019
Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel 27th June 2019	https://democracy.merton.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=157&MId=3437&Ver=4
Cabinet 15th July 2019	https://democracy.merton.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=146&MId=3396&Ver=4
Overview and Scrutiny Commission 14 th August 2019	Special meeting scheduled https://democracy.merton.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=148&MId=3592&Ver=4

- *We fully recognise the seriousness of the air pollution problem in Merton and would wish to see this urgently addressed. However the blunt instrument of raising the cost of CPZ permits is not backed up by sufficient evidence to allow us to support the proposals. The proposals also discriminate against residents of Wimbledon which has less pollution than the problem areas in the borough in Mitcham and Morden.*

Officer response

We believe the seriousness of the air pollution problem in Merton has been well set out in the committee reports listed above. Notwithstanding this it is important to note parking charges are part of the solution, alongside a number of other activities that the council is undertaking to address this problem.

A number of parking charges have evolved over the years and have met the

needs for specific areas and schemes at a particular point in time. There were minor adjustments in 2015, but no significant review has been undertaken

since before 2010. However, in this review the opportunity to further simplify the charges has been taken. Likewise, the proposals seek to further strengthen and develop the links between Public Health, air quality and how future charges can moderate parking behaviour.

Over the last 10 years where car parking and permit prices have been frozen the number of cars registered in Merton rose from 69,500 to 71,900. Whilst car ownership in the borough has started to decline over the last 12 months' overall car ownership has risen by approximately 3.3% over the last 10 years.

Future charging levels, that are too low, will not meet our future strategic objectives to improve public health and air quality, increase active travel and see the level of car ownership decrease.

The previous committee reports set out four basic principles, which set out the rationale that underpin the proposed charging structure:-

- (i). Ease of access to public transport
- (ii). Air Quality indicators
- (iii). Parking demand and space availability
- (iv). Enforcement requirements

(i) Ease of access to public transport:

In proposing the grouping and charge levels of each CPZ. Each CPZ was assessed against PTAL levels and as a guide, the criteria set out below:

- CPZs within 20 minutes' walk of an (1) underground and (2) mainline station and tram stop are in Tier 1.
- CPZs within 20-minute walk of (1) an underground or (2) mainline station are Tier 2.
- CPZs with no access to a mainline or an underground station within an approx. 20-minute walk are Tier 3.
- There are buses in many cases which complement access to train and tram provision within the borough.

(ii) Air Quality:

Merton's air quality levels are poor. A charging structure, that helps to change habits and car ownership throughout the borough, will have a beneficial medium to long-term effect. A number of hotspots coincide with areas of high parking demand and traffic movement. e.g. Wimbledon Town Centre. These focus areas align themselves with some of the more congested areas of the borough, and support the recommendations, which aim to address air quality issues.

(iii) Areas of high parking demand

Parking demand varies within the borough. Higher Charges are being proposed in areas of high demand to encourage the journey to be made either by walking, cycling or public transport, rather than by the use of a car.

(iv) Enforcement requirements

It is recommended to align charges with the hours of operation of the permit bays. For example, permits for a CPZ that are controlled for a shorter period, should cost less than permits for zones that are controlled for a longer period. There is a direct cost of enforcement, dependant on the length of time a scheme is operational. This is reflected in the proposed cost of a permit.

The proposals are not based on air quality or pollution in isolation. The annual Mean NO2 data for 2018 in Appendix C3 clearly shows that the air quality exceedances are dispersed across the borough including Wimbledon.

A copy of the councils Air Quality Action plan is attached at Appendix C2 which shows the full extent of the Councils policy choices and projects which the parking charges review will compliment.

The Council believes that the evidence it has provided to members sets out the rationale why Merton needs to use all of the powers available, to tackle and challenge this problem, and also to work towards delivering our legal responsibilities to protect the public.

There are very few direct levers available to stimulate a change in driver behaviour, and the council believes that the rationale for setting the new parking charges is about giving people the right nudge and opportunity to make different choices.

(a) proportionality (i.e. the action must be proportionate to the desired outcome);

- *The decision to proceed with the CPZ and parking bay increase is disproportionate to the desired outcome. The claimed outcome that a reduction in emissions will occur as residents will switch away from private vehicles is not supported by credible evidence. The only credible assertion in the **Public health, air quality and sustainable transport - a strategic approach to parking charges** is that the revenue received by the council will rise by almost £2,000,000 across the borough.*
- *The decision does not offer any practical solutions to deal with the pollution hot spots in Mitcham and Morden and nor does it offer support for low emission bus zones or other air quality mitigation measures that have been shown to work.*
- *This policy as proposed is a blunt instrument which doesn't appear necessarily to target the behaviour which is causing the borough's air pollution problems. The levy simply penalises residents who live in a CPZ regardless of how much they actually drive their vehicle.*

Officer response

A copy of the councils Air Quality Action plan is attached at Appendix C2 which

shows the full extent of the councils actions to deal with the pollution hot spots across the borough including Mitcham and Morden.

This measure is considered to be 'High Priority' and 'High Benefit' by the GLA (our Governing Body). It is difficult at the onset of such a policy to predict the outcome and direct benefit on ambient air quality; this can only be established as the impact of change becomes apparent and assessment of monitored air quality trends over a period of time. As data becomes available, this change can be reviewed and assessed against tail pipe reductions as the policy develops.

This policy supports a multi-faceted approach to tackling air quality in the borough. It is not the only measure the Council is taking and needs to be considered in the context of a comprehensive plan to tackle air quality in the borough.

(Refer to Appendix C2)

Please refer to a recent letter sent by the Leader of the Council to the Mayor of London seeking their support for the further introduction of low emission buses within the borough as soon as possible. Appendix C4.

A reduction in car ownership, more use of public transport and a shift to more sustainable active modes of transport, will inevitably help to reduce the levels of car based emissions throughout the borough.

A number of respondents stated that parked cars do not pollute. No car is bought just to be parked; it is bought to be driven. How often and how far does vary, but it will be driven. The principle of charging based on location to public transport and local amenities is that it is easier to travel without the car on a day-to-day basis, than from locations with poorer access to amenities and public transport.

(c) respect for human rights and equalities;

- *No due regard has been given as to the impact this would have on the elderly, it was acknowledged by the cabinet member and the director that specific elderly welfare groups such as AgeUK Merton, the Wimbledon Guild etc. have not been contacted or made duly aware of these proposals. Unlike the direct contact made by the Council to the business community and some residents associations.*
- *Page 13 of the revised and altered EIA document shows that 50% of over 65s have some form of limitation to do daily activities. However this assessment then goes on to claim there is no negative impact on the elderly, and casually asserts that the proposed parking fees will be positive. We are not sure what evidence they have to back this up.*

Officer Response

On the matter of directly consulting with equality groups, the list below shows the organisations that were directly contacted at the start of the consultation March 2019 seeking their views.

- Wimbledon Guild - info@wimbledonguild.co.uk
- Age UK Merton.- info@ageukmerton.org.uk
- Polish Family Organisation - slawek.szczepanski@polishfamily.co.uk
- BAME voice - info@bamevoice.org
- Carers Support Merton info@csmerton.org
- Ethnic Minority Centre ethnicminority@btconnect.com
- Mitcham and Morden Guild mandmguild@aol.com
- Merton CIL info@mertoncil.org.uk
- Merton Seniors Forum mertonseniorsforum@hotmail.co.uk

In addition, a copy of the consultation documentation was also sent to Merton Voluntary Sector Compact (MVSC) who in themselves have direct links to over 800 voluntary groups and organisations in Merton.

A copy of the consultation documentation sent out to the above equality groups is attached as Appendix C5.

The councils consultation website and the links sent to the relevant equality groups all included hyperlinks to the Cabinet - Public health, air quality and sustainable transport strategic approach to parking charges report in December 2108.

As well as the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny in January 2019, all of which have the link to the reinvent EIA's to allow individuals and groups to comment on the proposed mitigations and action plans as drafted at that point in time. <https://democracy.merton.gov.uk/documents/s26073/Appendix%208%20-%20Equality%20Analysis%20for%20public%20health%20and%20air%20quality.pdf>

Following an analysis of all the responses received the EIA for the Public health, air quality and sustainable transport-a strategic approach to parking charges report, was updated to reflect the feedback from the consultation in advance of the June Scrutiny meeting and Cabinet on the 15th July 2019.

<https://democracy.merton.gov.uk/documents/s28668/Revised%20Equalities%20mpact%20Assessment%20v%20june%202019%20v3.pdf>

We received no responses relating to the consultation from any of the above organisations representing equality groups.

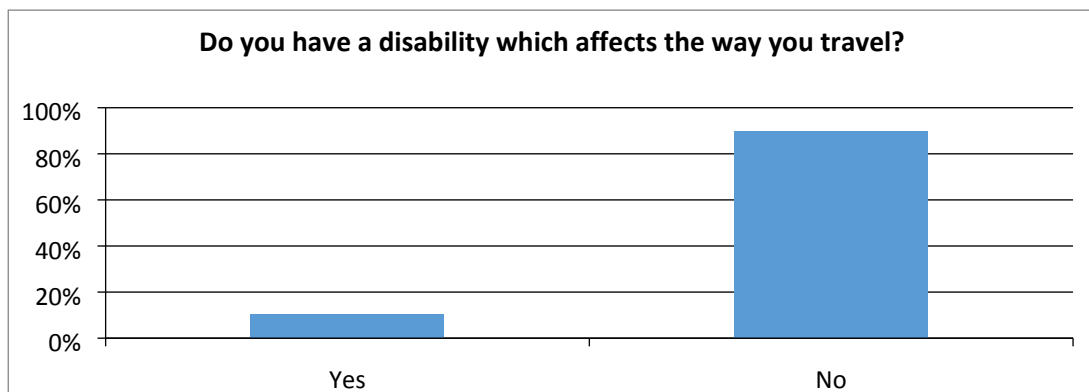
A more detailed analysis of the consultation responses shows that there were 210 people (6.6%) out of the circa 3,000 who replied said they needed a car for the following reasons:

Disabled /elderly plus social isolation / carers	210	6.6%
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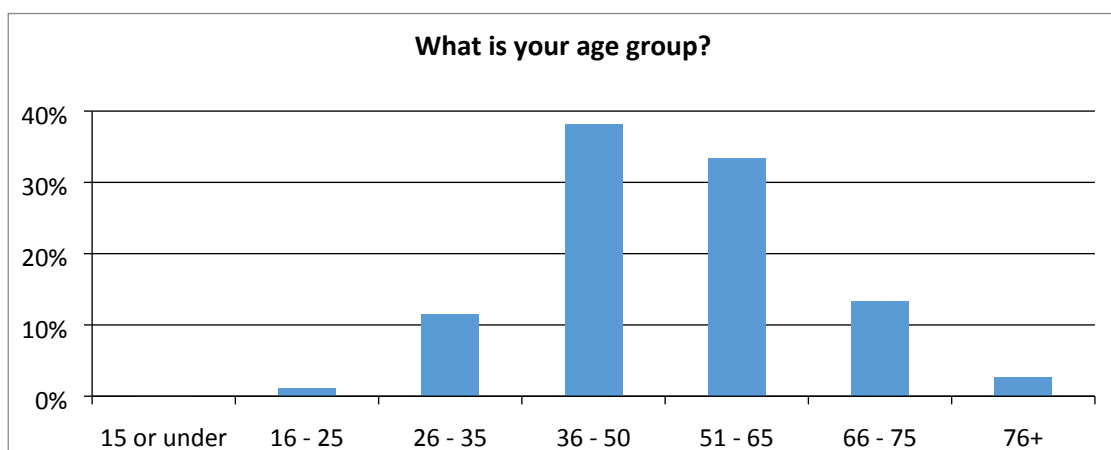
These figures needs to be considered against the 209,400 residents, which is projected to increase by around 3.9% to 217,500 by 2025.

The total number of responses received from residents within the borough equates you 1.43% of population within Merton.

The responses from the consultation also showed that 10% of the respondents have a disability, which affects the way they travel. This equates to 0.14% of residents within the borough.



The responses from the consultation also showed that 16% of the respondents were over the age of 65. This equates to 0.23% of residents within the borough.



Section 3 of the EIA assessment attached to the Cabinet report on the 15th July 2019, set out a detailed profile that included all residents, businesses, workers and visitors to the borough including the elderly. Section 6 of the report states that under potential negative impact for age that “as there is an acceptance that

elderly people are more likely to be infirm, have mobility problems or have a disability than younger people.”

Age

Positive Impact

The proposals support the previous rationale of seeking to adjust driver behaviour and to ensure that we can provide a modern, efficient and environmentally sustainable transport policy for residents, visitors and businesses, now and in the future.

The proposals support the Public Health vision to protect and improve physical and mental health outcomes for the whole population in Merton, and to reduce health inequalities. At the heart of the strategy is the concept that the environment is a key driver for health. It can be summarised by ‘making the healthy choice the easy choice’.

In setting out its measures of success, the new charging policy aims to deliver reduced car ownership and usage across the borough, encourage more people to undertake alternative forms of active travel, purchase fewer resident permits and lead to a rebalancing of our streets - to benefit residents and businesses alike. This includes the shift to more active and sustainable transport modes (such as walking, cycling and public transport) the impact of vehicle emissions and congestion on air quality, and demand for kerbside space, which form the backdrop of the policy direction.

Potential Negative Impact

None identified. However please refer to ‘Disability’ below, as there is an acceptance that elderly people are more likely to be infirm, have mobility problems or have a disability than younger people.

Disability

Positive Impact

The proposals support the previous rationale of seeking to adjust driver behaviour and to ensure that we can provide a modern, efficient and environmentally sustainable transport policy for residents, visitors and businesses, now and in the future.

The proposals support the Public Health vision to protect and improve physical and mental health outcomes for the whole population in Merton, and to reduce health inequalities. At the heart of the strategy is the concept that the environment is a key driver for health. It can be summarised by ‘making the healthy choice the easy choice’.

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Potential Negative Impact

Negative Impact: Any increase in parking charges has the potential to negatively impact on those with a disability.

Note. There is an acceptance that elderly people are more likely to be infirm, have mobility problems, but may not be considered disabled. For the purpose of this EIA the mitigation for problems commonly caused by age such as being infirm or mobility problems have been addressed under disability.

Improvement Action Plan

Please refer to Appendix A2 section 8

There are also 3 Freedom Passes;

- For people aged 66 or above
- For 60 plus years with a Oyster Photo Car off peak travel only from 09:30 on weekdays and anytime on weekends and public holidays.
- For disabled people if you have an eligible disability and live in London.. The Freedom Pass allows people free travel across London and free local bus journeys nationally.

Dial a Ride

TfL also offers a service for the following customers who can make use of a mini bus or adapted vehicle service for a door-to-door service.

<https://tfl.gov.uk/modes/dial-a-ride/making-the-most-of-dial-a-ride?intcmp=59082>

You must have a permanent or long-term disability, which means you are unable to use public transport. You are automatically eligible for membership if you are:

- A Taxicard member
- Getting the Higher Rate Mobility Component of Disability Living Allowance
- Getting the Standard or Enhanced Mobility Rate of the Personal Independence Payment (PIP)
- Registered blind or partially sighted
- Aged 85 or over
- Getting a Higher Rate Attendance Allowance
- Getting a War Pension Mobility Supplement

If none of the above apply to you, you may still be able to join Dial-a-Ride but you will have to undergo a paper-based mobility assessment to establish your eligibility for the service.

Taxi card

There is the London Taxicard scheme which provides subsidised taxi transport for people who have serious mobility or visual impairment and who have difficulty using public transport.

https://www.bromley.gov.uk/info/200022/help_with_transport/149/london_taxicard_scheme

Merton is committed to supporting its residents that have mobility issues, and there are a number of ways we currently support this objective.

Merton is a member of the national Blue Badge scheme. The Blue Badge provides a range of parking and other motoring concessions for people who are registered blind or have severe mobility problems. Blue Badge holders can park free of charge in any Merton disabled parking bay, pay & display and shared use bay or permit holder bay.

Later this year the Blue Badge eligibility scheme will be extended to those with a wide range of mental health issues that affect their mobility. This will extend our current provision to support additional residents within the Borough.

A Blue Badge holder in Merton is entitled to apply for a free carer permit under certain conditions. This is to further support those residents with mobility issues and in need of regular support and care. The carer permit eligibility is based on being a Blue Badge holder.

Any increase in charges is offset by eligibility for a Blue Badge, which provides free on street parking at many locations, including on single and double yellow lines.

Blue badge holders in Merton can park in their CPZs at no cost by displaying their blue badges.

Those with disabilities are also able to apply for the creation of a disabled bay.

- *Many require carers who will not be able to afford to pay large fees in every CPZ they visit. The director made an off the cuff remark at cabinet about carers being able to get a special permit but there is little to no detail on the website to advise on this or information that could be given to the elderly requiring carers.*

Officer Response

Carer's Resident Address Permit entitlement

Any person who is a resident of Merton and a Blue Badge Holder is entitled to a free Residents Address Permit. This is a paper permit which can be transferred between vehicles for display in the vehicle which is being used to visit the Blue Badge holder. It is only valid in the CPZ where the Blue Badge holder lives. It is valid for 12 months. This concession is advertised on our web pages and is a policy which has been in place for a number of years.

This provision is also extended on application to residents who have provided medical evidence from a GP or medical professional, demonstrating the need regular visits. Merton issued approximately 1,100 of these permits between April 2018 and May 2019.

There are other ways we can assist those who need short term additional visits, either through the sale of visitor vouchers, including increasing the limit in exceptional circumstances, or by providing a number free of charge, at our discretion.

Further if it is the same family member(s) who use the same car to visit and assist those needing care for a short period, we can add that vehicle to our database to prevent a PCN from being issued.



[Home](#) < [Streets, parking and transport](#) < [Parking](#)

Blue Badge parking permits for disabled people

The national Blue Badge Scheme provides a range of parking and other motoring concessions for people who are registered blind or have severe mobility problems.

Blue Badge holders can park free of charge in any Merton [disabled parking bay](#), pay and display, shared use bay or permit holder bay for an unlimited period.

Residents with a Blue Badge may also apply for a [resident permit](#) free of charge.

- *The same impact assessment on page 16 claims the disability groups would receive a positive impact because of this proposal. But simultaneously states there could be a negative impact on the disabled. It refers back to 'Age' and in that section it refers to 'Disability' in a circular loop without once outlining or acknowledging what the impact on these groups would be.*
- *Section 3 of the EIA assessment attached to the Cabinet report on the 15th July 2019, set out a detailed profile that included all residents, businesses, workers and visitors to the borough including the elderly. Section 6 of the report states that under potential negative impact for age that "as there is*

an acceptance that elderly people are more likely to be infirm, have mobility problems or have a disability than younger people.”

Age

Positive Impact

The proposals support the previous rationale of seeking to adjust driver behaviour and to ensure that we can provide a modern, efficient and environmentally sustainable transport policy for residents, visitors and businesses, now and in the future.

The proposals support the Public Health vision to protect and improve physical and mental health outcomes for the whole population in Merton, and to reduce health inequalities. At the heart of the strategy is the concept that the environment is a key driver for health. It can be summarised by ‘making the healthy choice the easy choice’.

In setting out its measures of success, the new charging policy aims to deliver reduced car ownership and usage across the borough, encourage more people to undertake alternative forms of active travel, purchase fewer resident permits and lead to a rebalancing of our streets - to benefit residents and businesses alike. This includes the shift to more active and sustainable transport modes (such as walking, cycling and public transport) the impact of vehicle emissions and congestion on air quality, and demand for kerbside space, which form the backdrop of the policy direction.

Potential Negative Impact

None identified. However please refer to ‘Disability’ below, as there is an acceptance that elderly people are more likely to be infirm, have mobility problems or have a disability than younger people.

Disability

Positive Impact

The proposals support the previous rationale of seeking to adjust driver behaviour and to ensure that we can provide a modern, efficient and environmentally sustainable transport policy for residents, visitors and businesses, now and in the future.

The proposals support the Public Health vision to protect and improve physical and mental health outcomes for the whole population in Merton, and to reduce health inequalities. At the heart of the strategy is the concept that the environment is a key driver for health. It can be summarised by ‘making the healthy choice the easy choice’.

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undertake alternative forms of active travel, purchase fewer resident permits and lead to a rebalancing of our streets - to benefit residents and businesses alike. This includes the shift to more active and sustainable transport modes (such as walking, cycling and public transport) the impact of vehicle emissions and congestion on air quality, and demand for kerbside space, which form the backdrop of the policy direction.

Potential Negative Impact

Negative Impact: Any increase in parking charges has the potential to negatively impact on those with a disability.

Note. There is an acceptance that elderly people are more likely to be infirm, have mobility problems, but may not be considered disabled. For the purpose of this EIA the mitigation for problems commonly caused by age such as being infirm or mobility problems have been addressed under disability.

Improvement Action Plan

Please refer to Appendix A2 EIA section 8.

We would expect the council to contact and liaise with such groups as Merton CIL, Merton Vision etc. to assess the true impacts on these communities before making assertions of fact.

Council Response

On the matter of directly consulting with equality groups, the list below shows the organisations that were directly contacted at the start of the consultation March 2019 seeking their views.

- **Merton CIL** info@mertoncil.org.uk
 - Wimbledon Guild - info@wimbledonguild.co.uk
 - Age UK Merton.- info@ageukmerton.org.uk
 - Polish Family Organisation - slawek.szczepanski@polishfamily.co.uk
 - BAME voice - info@bamevoice.org
 - Carers Support Merton info@csmerton.org
 - Ethnic Minority Centre ethnicminority@btconnect.com
 - Mitcham and Morden Guild mandmguild@aol.com
 - Merton Seniors Forum mertonseniorsforum@hotmail.co.uk
-
- *A further group, pregnancy and maternity, has not been factored in as to why residents at this stage of life wish to have a car. Use of a car is often the only way to get to the hospital as public transport could be difficult to access when heavily pregnant or with young child.*
 - *The lack of step free access to railways and even buses does not help. The fact that it is difficult to reach the hospitals. The council needs to recognise that this group would be penalised by their need for a car. Also they are less likely to be able to hire vehicles whilst at this phase. Car*

Clubs are not the right solution for this group.

Officer Response

Hospitals are actually very well served by public transport, with bus and underground options to the 2 major hospitals of St Georges, Tooting and St Helier, Sutton.

Car Clubs

Car Clubs are in many cases a genuine alternative to owning a car and continue to grow in popularity and membership throughout Merton and London. They are quick easy and convenient to use for short local trips as well as longer visits or period.

Taxis

Taxi's are also a practical solution to attend appointments and undertake visits. This links shows the benefits and convenience of using a taxi for visits to hospitals for example. <https://www.gov.uk/transport-disabled/taxis-and-minicabs>

Taxi card

There is the London Taxicard scheme which provides subsidised taxi transport for people who have serious mobility or visual impairment and who have difficulty using public transport. <https://tfl.gov.uk/modes/taxis-and-minicabs/taxicard-and-capital-call>

M- Card

Children and young people on Merton's Disability Database for Children and Young People may be eligible for an M-Card. This card will identify that your child has a disability or special need and can be used to obtain discounts or get help such as 'fast tracking' when there are long queues.

<https://www.merton.gov.uk/social-care/children-young-people-and-families/m-card>

1. M-Card allows at school dropping off and picking up time, 30 minutes at the schools listed.
2. M-Card allows 2 hours free parking at children centres.
3. M-Card at Peel House, allows a second hours parking free.

The Council works closely with TfL and Network Rail to ensure that the Highway infrastructure accommodates the efficiency of public transport services. This includes accessibility.

- (1) The extract below has been taken from a recent letter sent by the Leader of the council Mayor of London attached as Appendix C4 .

In addition, whilst we are encouraging residents to give up their cars we need to be more confident that there will be safe and accessible public transport options available. The lack of step free access at some of our busy train stations, particularly Raynes Park and Motspur Park, is a cause for concern, and any action you could take to expedite step action here would be appreciated.

TfL supported us in our unsuccessful bid earlier this year to the Department for Transport for Access for all monies and I would like to ask you for support for future bids or alternate funds that we can sue to provide step free access to all public transport across the borough.

The council with this policy are actively discriminating against residents in Mitcham because their policy does nothing to help improve air quality or public health. The report only seeks to improve public health in areas of the borough already acknowledged to have better health levels. Your policy will condemn residents in Mitcham to worse air quality and will do nothing to help bridge the gap. In fact you are making it worse.

Officer response

There is no active discrimination against residents in Mitcham.

In cases where there is a reasonable opportunity to use public transport, or indeed walk or cycle, Merton's aim is to encourage everyone to use these options over the use of a motor vehicle. Generally, charges have been set higher where there is good transport links over less well-served areas. This is applicable to the proposed charges in CPZs, on street and in our car parks.

There is a significant difference in transport infrastructure and accessibility depending on where a resident lives, visits or works within the borough. This is presented in the form of a 'Public Transport Accessibility Levels' (PTAL) as set out by TfL and formed part of the review. TfL have grading's for each area of London – ranging from the highest to the lowest.

It is therefore easier in principle for a person living, visiting or commuting to a high PTAL rated area to use alternative sustainable of transport, compared to residents in low PTAL rated areas.

Furthermore there is less access to public transport in the East so residents have less discretion over their mode of transport

The policy will not condemn residents in Mitcham to worse air quality. The council is doing a great deal to improve air quality through its AQAP. The AQAP has over 70 actions, of which parking policy change is only one.

Regarding bridging the gap, the Health and Wellbeing Board has endorsed the East Merton Model of Health and Wellbeing, which will address the lower life expectancy in the East in the long term. Some of the specific projects which implement this are:

- The redevelopment of the Wilson Hospital as a health and wellbeing campus
- Prototyping of social prescribing for Merton starting with general practices in the East
- Focus on activity in the East in the forthcoming Merton Year of Physical Activity
- Siting of the Merton Mile in Figg's Marsh

(d) a presumption in favour of openness;

- *This decision to increase the cost of CPZ permits has been taken and put*

to a consultation that will not have a bearing on the outcome of the decision. The current Cabinet Member has publicly stated at the Wimbledon Community Forum in March that 'it is a consultation not a referendum'.

- *Over 3,000 residents, numerous resident associations and many local businesses commented negatively during the consultation. No consideration has been given to their responses which support scrapping the charges. The council has therefore not listened to any group who have decided to engage with the consultation and has therefore displayed a close minded approach, and has shown that the decision has not been made through an open process of engagement.*

Officer Response

A statutory consultation of this sort is, as enshrined within existing legislation, not vote and therefore the numbers of responses is not a key factor in itself. A statutory consultation is an opportunity for members of the public and organisations who do not support the proposals to express their objections and the Council is required to give weight to the nature and content of representations and not necessarily the quantity of them. Therefore, it is the reason for the objection that is important and that must be considered.

Members considered the responses made during the formal consultation process alongside further references and considerations raised by the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

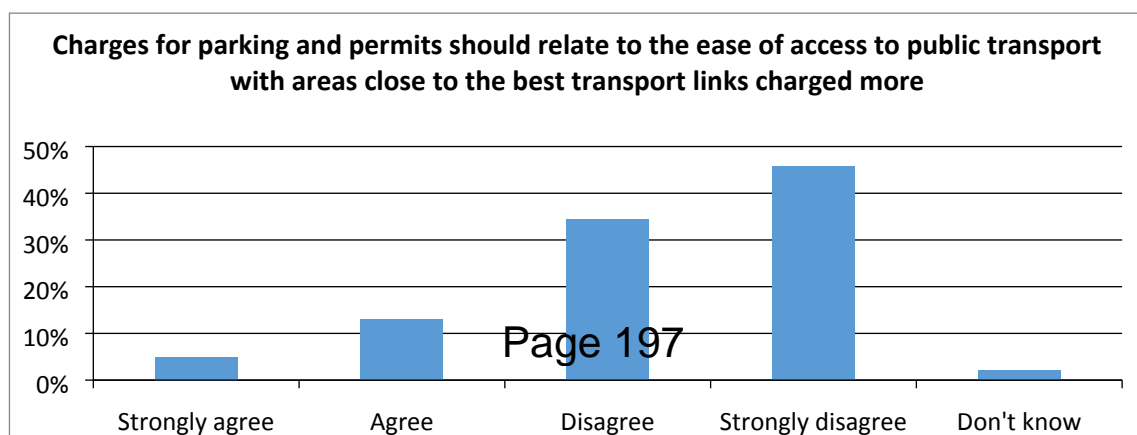
Further to the consultation process, Members agreed to the proposed charges set out in Appendix 7 of the Cabinet report including the following amendments

- (i) Controlled Parking Zones: VNE, VNS, VN, VQ, VSW, VSW1, and VSW2, be re-categorised from Tier 1 to Tier 2 (as set out in Appendices 7 d & e)
- (ii) That off street car parking charges in Queens Road Wimbledon and St Georges car park are reduced from the current £3 flat rate fee from 6.00pm to 11 pm to a £2 flat fee (as set out in Appendix 7 b).

Resident permit charges have been frozen since 2009, which means in real terms they have reduced in price for 10 years.

The review considered an appropriate price to be one that challenges motorists to consider the use of other more sustainable forms of transport.

The sale and price of permits is another way the council can influence car/vehicle use within the borough and directly contribute to the MTP, LIP and AQAP objectives.



A number of residents highlighted the lack of public transport in specific areas of the borough. Representation highlighted that in some CPZs there could be more than 20-minute walk to reach a main line station or underground station. Although buses may provide alternative transport, it is accepted that access to public transport did vary within each area of the borough. The recent Residents survey referred to the provision of public transport within the borough, as being the most highly valued.

In reviewing the PTAL rating for each CPZ and further analysing walking distances to main line, tram and underground stations access, it is agreed that Controlled Parking Zones VNE, VNS, VN, VQ, VSW, VSW1, VSW2, be re-categorised as Tier 2 from Tier 1 as shown in Appendices 7d – 7f.

At all of the Cabinet meetings, the council has signified its intention to keep all of the parking charges under review over the next 12 months.

- *The decision has been sent through the scrutiny process even though the decision has already been made in the Leader's Strategy Group and Cabinet in December. This was shown in the sustainable community Overview and Scrutiny Panel papers in January which showed the inclusion of the Parking Charges increase in the Budget papers which listed the £1.9 million charge increase per annum.*
- *Following the publication of the responses to the consultation, it is clear that the perception of residents is that this decision has been taken predominantly in order to generate revenue for the council.*

Officer Response

Any increase in parking charges will inevitably have an effect on parking income. This is difficult to accurately predict since we are seeking to change motorists' behaviour and reduce car usage. As such, the current Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) savings of £1.9m in 2019/20 and a further £1.9m in 2020/21 reflect assumptions on estimated decreases in demand across each income stream e.g. resident permits, visitor permits, pay etc. These are a best estimate at this stage taking into account the changes proposed and the potential changes in motorists' behaviour that we expect to see.

The estimated 2019/20 income of £1.9m is based on an implementation date of 1st October 2019. The overall level of income that will be achieved will be dependent on the actual implementation date and level of charges agreed following due process and consideration. It is important to note that the raising of income is not a contributing factor to any decision making process and, therefore, the income figure will be reviewed again following any decisions taken.

Local authorities are not permitted to use parking charges solely to raise income. When setting charges we must instead focus on how the charges will contribute to delivering the Council's traffic management and key sustainability objectives.

In terms of any income that may be generated by the increased charges, the Traffic Management Act 2004 amends section 55 (4) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and directs that income should be used:

- (a) To make good any payment used for parking places,
- (b) For the provision of or maintenance of off street parking (whether in the Open or not) and
- (c) Where off street parking provision is unnecessary or undesirable:
 - (i) To meet the costs of provision of or operation of public passenger transport services, or
 - (ii) For highway or road improvement projects within the borough, or
 - (iii) For meeting costs incurred by the authority in respect of the maintenance of roads maintained at the public expense by them,Or
 - (iv) For the purposes of environmental improvement in the local authority's area, or
 - (v) Any other purposes for which the authority may lawfully incur expenditure.

In addition, for London authorities, this includes the costs of doing anything “which facilitates the implementation of the London transport strategy”

However, for the reasons set out above Members must disregard any benefit in terms of the revenue that may be generated by these proposals when making the decision as to whether to proceed or not.

(e) clarity of aims and desired outcomes

- *The Cabinet Member says that the increase is about improving public health and reducing air pollution across the whole of the borough. The report details pollution hot spots, of which there are a few locations in Wimbledon, however many of the serious levels of pollution are in Mitcham and Morden, these are outside of the scope of the increased charges, and therefore the rationale that air quality will be improved by residents shifting away from car usage will not occur in some of the worst affected areas of the borough.*

Officer response

Every year the Pollution Team produces a statutory return called an Annual Status Report (ASR) This document details the monitored levels of pollution in the borough and shows that we are exceeding our objective levels in all areas of the

borough.

The overwhelming contributor to pollution is traffic and transport.

In Merton, an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) has been declared for the whole borough with four locations identified as having high levels of pollution and human exposure. These are in the main centres of Mitcham, Morden, Raynes Park and Wimbledon.

Poor air quality in Merton comes from a number of sources, but our legal exceedances are almost entirely due to road transport. Road transport accounts for approximately 60% of emissions of NO₂ in our borough. Simply put, this is due to traffic including the nature of vehicles on our roads, the volume of vehicles and the number of trips that they take.

A number of representations highlighted a range of traffic and road safety issues/concerns, often with a link to the likelihood of individuals choosing cycling and walking over the use of a car. The point was also made that through traffic as opposed to parked cars were the primary contributor to poor air quality. There were also comments about HGVs, Taxi's, buses and other transport being a contributor to the problem, and that the council should look to address these issues.

The Council acknowledges there is no one simple solution to the growing problem of poor air quality and other transport related matters caused by increased car ownership and general traffic with the borough and London more widely. The Council has a duty and we are addressing the many concerns in respect of 'other factors', which contribute to poor air quality and congestion.

The Council will continue to lobby Government and work with TfL to reduce HGV emissions. The Mayor of London is taking action with the new Ultra Low Emission Zones, which has the ambition to push the change towards cleaner and less polluting vehicles as quickly as possible.

Please also refer to the Leaders letter recently sent to the Mayor of London.

The Mayor of London's ambition is to make London a zero carbon city by 2050. As a local authority Merton will be following this lead in improving air quality and consider initiatives such as the ULEZ charge which targets older and higher polluting diesel and petrol vehicles. Processes are in place to phase out purchasing of diesel buses; introduce hybrids and electric buses; Retrofit scheme outside central London. As of 2018, all new black taxis must be zero emission capable and given that these vehicles cannot be older than 8 years, the phasing of existing air polluters is inevitable. We are also working with TfL to identify suitable sites Rapid Charging points for taxis.

The London Mayor is committed to making London's bus fleet cleaner with all TfL buses expected to be electric or hydrogen by 2037. The Council believes that TfL's bus replacement does not go far enough and should be accelerated so that the whole of greater London can enjoy the benefits of cleaner buses much sooner. It will continue to lobby TfL to make buses in Merton cleaner.

- *We do not see how using a hike in parking charges will actually achieve the stated aim of improving air quality. The proposed tax takes no account of the through traffic from other boroughs, industrial users, busses, HGVs and taxis. Therefore it is hard to conclude how increasing parking charges will materially make a difference to air quality, and the report does not clearly make this link and is not backed up with credible evidence.*

Officer response

See response to the paragraph above.

- *We acknowledge that forcing people out of their cars leaves them with little choice but to use public transport, or walk or cycle. However, this will not be applied to large parts of Mitcham where the parking fees are lower or non-existent. The proposed charges will not help Mitcham health levels to improve which your own report has stated is far worse than Wimbledon.*

Officer response

A copy of the Councils Air Quality Action plan is attached at Appendix C2 which shows the full extent of the Councils actions to deal with the pollution hot spots across the borough including Mitcham and Morden.

This measure is considered to be 'High Priority' and 'High Benefit' by the GLA our governing body. It is difficult at the onset of such a policy to predict the outcome and direct benefit on ambient air quality; this can only be established as the impact of change becomes apparent and assessment of monitored air quality trends over a period of time. As data becomes available, this change can be reviewed and assessed against tail pipe reductions as the policy develops.

This policy supports a multi-faceted approach to tackling air quality in the borough. It is not the only measure the council is taking and needs to be considered in the context of a comprehensive plan to tackle air quality.

(Refer to Appendix C2)

- *It appears to any casual reader of the report that the actual desired outcome is to achieve a budget gain to close a gap in the council's finances.*

Officer response

The answer set out in section 'd' above covers how parking charge income can be used.

- *The report does not make any real display of what desired outcomes would be other than trying to reduce the number of permits issued. There are no specific measures to define what reductions of emission are aimed for, what metrics on increased public transport use, and no indication of what metrics will be used to measure the increase in public health across the borough.*

- *The revenue that will be received all just appears to go in the general funds of the E&R department to spend on whatever transport or environmental items it determines. The report should have set down precisely what anti-pollution measures would be implemented with this additional revenue, i.e. new tree planting, cycle and walking infrastructure improvements, pollution abatement outside key school sites etc.*

Officer response

As part of the information provided during the consultation period, residents, business associations, visitors, resident associations and organisations were directed to a proposed list of measures of success that the council could consider using for the future.

Ultimately, the outcome the Council is aiming for, is improved health and wellbeing of our residents, visitors and those who work in the borough. We know this will take time and effort from many other organisations. Merton are however committed to do what we can. There are some things we can measure to make sure we focus on developing a more sustainable transport strategy over the coming years, which include:

- Reduction in congested areas of our high streets
- Reduction in CPZs / permits issued, including visitor permits, including:
- Reduction in multiple permits sold to the same house
- Reduction in the number of season tickets sold
- Investment in infrastructure and sustainable transport solutions:
- Number of additional electric charging bays
- Number of additional cycle routes
- Number of additional cycle parking facilities
- Greater use of public transport journeys within the borough
- Increase in the number of 'active transport' activity in the borough:
- Number of walking journeys in the borough
- Number of cycling journeys in the borough

It is anticipated that these measures will be used over the coming years to determine the success and levels of the councils parking charging policy and how this contributes to less air pollution.

Public health:

Along with air quality a key objective is to contribute towards improved public health of Merton and London's residents. There are many factors beyond our control but we are committed to working with colleagues in Public Health and shall monitor progress.

The answer set out in section 'd' above covers how parking charge income can be used.

Notwithstanding this we can apply revenue to supporting the delivery of the Air Quality action plan as well as maintaining our commitment to delivering infrastructure in the borough.

(f) consideration and evaluation of alternatives;

- *No significant thought or effort seems to have been given to alternatives. There are other areas the council could focus on to bring down high levels of air pollution, instead of placing an additional burden on some residents*
- *This appears to be a single-minded exercise to raise extra income with no specific alternative having been tested or considered.*

Officer response

We refer Members to the Air Quality Action Plan shown in Appendix C2.

- *There is no explanation of how this solution came about, was it even in the labour manifesto at last year's council election and what other alternatives or ideas did the cabinet consider or not? Before settling on this solution what choice of options were there, or were they dismissed due to not providing the level of revenue needed to fill the budget gap.*
- *We believe the council should fully investigate other options that are less of a blunt tool and will have a greater impact on the air pollution issues facing the borough before confirming this decision hence the reason for the call in.*

Officer response

We refer Members to the response above; this was a policy that is clearly linked to our Air Quality Action Plan Appendix (C2), a Plan that has been in place for some time.

Documents requested.

- *Consultation materials sent to equality group stakeholders*
- *Evidence relied on to formulate policy*
- *Consideration of alternatives*

Officer response

These are all referenced within the report.

- *All papers provided to the Director of Environment and*

Regeneration/Director of Corporate Services/ and relevant Cabinet Members prior to, during and subsequent to the decision making process on parking charges increase.

- *All emails, reports and associated documentation relating to the decision on parking charges provided to the relevant Cabinet Members, Leader of the Council, Chief Executive, Director of Environment and Regeneration, Director of Corporate Services and other council officers.*
- *Meeting notes of all meetings between officers / Cabinet Members and any third parties on the parking charges increase.*

Officer response

These are available to councillors on request via Democratic Services.

- *Any correspondence between the council and organisations lobbying on the parking charges increase.*

Officer response

A copy of the consultation responses are available to councillors on request via Democratic Services.

- *The Equality Impact Assessment (or any other equalities analysis carried out) in relation to the parking charges increase.*

Officer response

These are all referenced within the report.

- *The risk analysis conducted in relation to the parking charges increase.*

Officer response

This is available to councillors on request via Democratic Services.

- *Detailed financial analysis of the parking charges increase, and in particular the impact on council revenue over the medium term.*

Officer response

This is provided in EXEMPT Appendix C6

Appendix C2: Air Quality Action Plan.

<https://www.merton.gov.uk/assets/Documents/Merton%20AQAP%2020182023.pdf>

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