

COLLIERS WOOD AND NE MITCHAM COMMUNITY FORUM  
3 OCTOBER 2019

(7.15 pm - 9.00 pm)

PRESENT Councillors Councillor John Dehaney (in the Chair),

## 1 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS (Agenda Item 1)

The meeting was held at Colliers Wood Library, and chaired by Councillor John Dehaney. 11 residents attended, as well as one other Merton Councillor. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

## 2 CLIMATE EMERGENCY (Agenda Item 2)

Katie Halter, Climate Officer for Merton Council informed residents about the Climate Emergency unanimously declared by the Council in July.

The declaration requires the borough to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Data from National Statistics indicate that Merton was responsible for emitting over half a million tonnes of greenhouse gases in 2018. Gas and electricity used in Merton's buildings (75%), and the use of petrol and diesel transport (25%) were mainly responsible. The amount of greenhouse emissions could potentially double if you include emissions that arise from goods use in the borough and from activities of Merton by residents that occur outside the borough, such as flying.

There are three specific commitments in declaration

1. Specific dates to reduce emissions – Merton Council carbon neutral by 2030; the borough as a whole by 2050. This means 12% annual reduction to achieve this, which implies the decarbonisation of around 3000 properties a year and 2,500 of the 75,000 petrol and diesel cars registered in Merton will need to be replaced by electric or active travel per year.
2. Create a Climate Emergency Action Plan by early 2020
3. Create a Climate Emergency Working group to gather evidence and ideas, which will contribute to the formation of the Action Plan.

For more information on the Climate emergency declaration, please see:

<https://www.merton.gov.uk/planning-and-buildings/sustainability-and-climate-change/climate-emergency>

Katie set out how residents could get involved

- Individual choices are critical – especially energy use, diet, and travel. [Sustainable Merton](#) has a helpful [checklist](#)
- Community Projects – the Council would like to support setting them up or hearing about them
- Climate action plan – please get involved in the consultation on the action plan when it begins, we welcome new ideas
- [Solar Power Together](#) – run by Mayor of London – they have vetted solar panel providers through collective bargaining power. Depending on how many sign up they will agree a supplier who will conduct a survey and agree a final price. Last year got 35% discount and they had good feedback on installations.
- National policies have an impact on our ability to decarbonise, so welcome pressure on politicians may help.

Katie was asked what was meant by decarbonisation and explained that this involved stopping greenhouse gas emissions going into the air by either stopping the activity or offsetting the emissions through other means like more trees. Katie also said that electric vehicles are significantly better than petrol/diesel, as they have more efficient engines and the average grid intensity of the electricity grid is lower compared to petrol and diesel, and is reducing due to increasing use of renewables.

A resident suggested that case studies could be shared with residents with examples of what can be done or is already being done. Katie agreed this was important and the new Community Plan will include spotlights on community work and we will be using all the channels we can to communicate with residents. A resident asked about the use of electric scooters on cycle lanes. Katie said that these are not legal on pavements or the road currently and the Council does not have the power to change this. If we can identify gaps in funding or legislation and we can raise these with government as part of the action plan.

A resident asked about energy use at the Civic Centre including the lights. Katie explained that this is one of many things that we are looking at to address as well as homeworking, procurement, staff travel, and our vehicle fleet including refuse trucks. Katie also said that there is already a Clean Air Strategy in Merton so we will be looking at the synergies with the new Climate Action Plan

A question was asked about the placement of mobile phone masts and Councillor Alambritis explained that under national guidelines there are restrictions what Councils can refuse, and as long as the application meets set standards planning authorities cannot refuse applications on health grounds.

Katie also said that future rounds of Solar Together would be dependent on future funding and any emissions from installation are outweighed by the benefits. Although feed-in tariffs have been scrapped they have been replaced by a smart export

guarantee (SEG) plus with which can offer a similar rate of return to 10 years ago (e.g. a 10 year pay back on investment on an average Semi with a South facing roof).

UPDATE following the meeting: Residents can get involved by completing a [survey](#) so their ideas can be included or contact [future.merton@merton.gov.uk](mailto:future.merton@merton.gov.uk).

### 3 COUNCIL UPDATE - LEADER OF THE COUNCIL, COUNCILLOR STEPHEN ALAMBRITIS (Agenda Item 3)

Councillor Alambritis provided an anonymous case study of a 93-year-old man who lives independently but on his own. After a fall, he was diagnosed with Alzheimer's and already had Type 2 Diabetes. Merton Council's Reablement team has worked with the resident to create a Reablement Plan including four visits a day, with new equipment to make his home accessible, a MASCOT alarm, and referred him to Age UK Merton for support. The resident is now regaining his confidence attending Wimbledon Guild to reduce his isolation. 45% of Merton Council controllable income goes on Adult Social Care and also supports groups like Wimbledon Guild and the Warm and Well project.

A Brexit Task Group is looking at the implications especially of a no deal Brexit, and is meeting monthly. We have also updated our Risk Register and have been supporting EU residents in Merton to access Settled Status, through funding a support worker Merton and Lambeth CAB, based in Morden. We are also monitoring Hate Crime incidents and looking at challenge for social care in terms of recruiting staff.

MyLondon rated Merton as 4<sup>th</sup> best borough for families, based on quality of schools, housing costs and services for families.

Merton Council has decided to keep all libraries open, with a new library in Colliers Wood. Thanks to volunteers to are essential to providing services and keeping libraries Wimbledon is the busiest in borough with more than 200,000 visitors to Arts Space last year. 95% of schools in Merton are good or outstanding. 23 Primary schools expanded to address demand and a new secondary school in South Wimbledon is already oversubscribed. Four of our care leavers went on to University this year. Merton Council is looking at how we support students with special needs and lobbying the government to help fund this work. You can get involved in the [consultation](#) before 16 October.

St Helier – government has announced more money for capital works trust but will it be used to build a new hospital in Belmont rather than keeping emergency services at St Helier. MP and Council will continue to fight to keep those services at St Helier.

Merton Council has allocated over £1m to community projects, revenue from developments like the AFC Wimbledon stadium development at Plough Lane.

A resident asked about nodal points for Harris Wimbledon Secondary School and Cllr Alambritis said one of these would benefit Colliers Wood

Residents raised a number of issues about street cleaning and refuse collection including why there had been no Veolia contract deductions to date; there were still problems with fly tipping and dealing with complaints; and investigating and enforcing fly tipping will help reduce the frequency. Cllr Alambritis replied that Merton Council is still in dispute with Veolia over deductions but doing all we can to resolve those issues, and have withheld payments. He also said that there were problems with street cleaning and missed collection still need addressing but good news with recycling rate now up to 45% and satisfaction with wheelie bins service improving. We are doing our level best to improve Veolia's performance and have invested more in enforcement and will continue to publicise successes but we have to balance pressure on resources.

A resident asked about a house swap for those in properties due to be demolished under regeneration if they want to move away, Cllr Alambritis said we could facilitate that conversation between different housing providers.

Residents asked about proposed changes to permitted development rules and Cllr Alambritis said planning is regulated by Government so Merton Council has to work within the rules but permitted development is a significant problem. We will be looking into the proposed changes and their impact. A resident also asked about comments on planning applications not being posted online. Cllr Alambritis said that due to GDPR issues we have had to respond with a short-term fix but longer term solutions are being explored.

#### 4 OPEN FORUM (Agenda Item 4)

A resident asked about the recent rape in Wandle Park, and if locking of Wandle Park and design of the access took safety into account. Another resident had been told by police that someone is in custody for the offence, the park had not been locked for many years, and lots of people involved in the designing the plans for the entrance. Cllr Alambritis added that the Council will look at safety implications if advised by the police.

A resident asked about the roadworks at London Road roundabout and Bishopford Road Bridge. Cllr Alambritis said designers are looking at whether the bridge can be repaired or would need to be replaced. He expected a report should come to Cabinet in November for a decision from members.

A resident commented that at the Planning Application Committee meeting the planning officer dealing with the High Path regeneration did not seem to know the brief very well. Cllr Alambritis said that the planning process is heavily proscribed and officers are very capable despite challenges of recruiting.

Councillor Dehaney thanked residents for attending and closed the meeting. The next meeting will be in October 2020, date to be confirmed.

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