

**1. From: Chris Ritchie**

**To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport**

*Please can I create a bump track cycle track for 3-10 years in the local community, in Morden Park?*

**Reply**

The Council has within the past two years, extended the cycling path network within Morden Park in order to encourage leisure cycling more generally. However, we currently have no plans that would develop the park for cycling in that way.

It is noted in your question that you have expressed an interest in developing this project. We would need to know more details about any plans prior to confirmation of any commitment to develop such a facility in the park.

**2. From: Richard Hopkinson-Woolley**

**To the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance**

*Why does the Council condone Veolia telling residents to leave bins on the pavement causing obstructions in breach of the Highways Act? Operatives then leave them in even worse positions. I have raised this more than three times; no satisfactory answer given. The Council is complicit in breach of law.*

**Reply**

The Council does not support either our service provider or our residents in leaving their wheelie bins on the pavement. Under our waste policy and procedures we have maintained a curtilage collection approach. This is to ensure that our pavements are kept clear of refuse containers restricting access for pushchair / wheelchair users. This requires householders to set out waste bins within the confines of their property as close to the edge as possible. As part of our monitoring process and to ensure high collection standards are maintained, the waste crews are required to return containers back to the curtilage of properties. Any site specific service issues are investigated and the operatives reminded of the service standards required.

If you wish to report an environmental issue such as bins on pavements please consider the official reporting process and log your request on line using the following link.

<http://www.merton.gov.uk/doitonline/report-it.htm>.

Alternatively if you prefer, please telephone our Customer Contact Centre: Tel – 020 8274 4901

**3. From: Emily Robertson**

**To the Cabinet Member for Women and Equalities**

*Will the Council please provide figures on the amount of turnover there is amongst staff at different seniority levels broken down by ethnicity?*

**Reply**

The attached document shows:

Overall workforce profile as at 31.08.2020

Overall leavers profile 01.09.2019 to 31.08.2020

Overall joiners profile 01.09.2019 to 31.08.2020

Each table is broken down into the broad ethnicity groups, and by £20,000 salary bands. Each table shows the proportion of staff in each category, and this approach enables the current workforce, leavers and joiners profiles to be compared.

There is also a summary table and chart comparing the overall profiles of current workforce, leavers and joiners.

The standard methodology currently adopted across London has been used, and based on the old Audit Commission methodology, of only including those staff where ethnicity is known in the figures. Due to the many variants of linked/career grades and conditions of service a wider salary band approach has been used in order to ensure that where there are figures of 5 or less, individual staff cannot be identified.

**4. Richard Poole**

**To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport**

*What data will the council be collecting to measure the impact of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods and School Streets on surrounding roads, and congestion on major traffic routes in the borough?*

**Reply**

Under normal circumstances, the Council would undertake before and after traffic and volume surveys on schemes such as these. However, given that the traffic in recent months cannot be considered as normal traffic (due to the lockdown), any surveys for comparison purposes would not be accurate.

With regards to school streets, the objective is to safe guard pedestrians particularly schoolchildren from concentrated vehicular congestion and the associated safety and pollution problems. Stopping rat running during the drop off and picking up periods achieves this objective.

We will be listening to feedback from residents, schools and any road users over the next six months after implementation of each Low Traffic Neighbourhood and school street scheme. Every scheme has an allocated feedback link on the website where

anyone can make their representations to any aspect of each scheme. [www.merton.gov.uk/covid-19-transport-projects](http://www.merton.gov.uk/covid-19-transport-projects).

This feedback will be used to determine the viability of the school streets (for each school). We will also be reviewing data from the council's enforcement teams.

**5. Barry Smith**

**To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport**

*What measures is the council taking to encourage TfL to use non-polluting buses (electric or hydrogen) on routes through Wimbledon where air quality limits are regularly breached?*

**Reply**

TfL's current programme to replace their bus fleet with electric or hydrogen vehicles is outlined in the London Mayor's Transport Strategy. Clearly the Council would like this programme brought forward and will raise this issue with TfL as bus service contracts are renewed or other opportunities arise. However TfL's ongoing financial pressures may limit their scope to accelerate this programme.

We do however welcome their plan to introduce electric double deck buses for the 200 bus route from early 2021 which runs from Mitcham to Raynes Park via Colliers Wood, Wimbledon Town and Wimbledon Village.

**6. Shipra Gupta**

**To the Cabinet Member for Women and Equalities**

*Will the council provide a commitment to targets and a specific timeline for improving recruitment and retention of BAME employees?*

**Reply**

We are working with our BAME forum in order to obtain their feedback in the following areas of diversity reporting, policy review, recruitment, training (including talent management, succession planning, unconscious bias and racism training, coaching and mentoring programme). Until we have consulted with our BAME workforce we do not have any hard targets that we can share at this point, nor a timeline except to say that we are keen to proceed without any delay.

**7. Klaartje Dresselaers**

**To the Women and Equalities**

*Can the Council confirm what percentage of its communications with residents are available in languages other than English, which languages these communications are available in and how residents are able to access these translations?*

## **Reply**

All communications from the Council are potentially available in other languages. There are no limitations to what languages can be translated to at present. A resident has to ask the producer of the document if they can have a copy in another language and a decision is then taken on each case as to the cost or if something else be provided.

### **8. Samantha MacArthur**

#### **To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport**

*Can the Council confirm if Merton will be participating in TfL's pilot of electric scooter hire and if so how and where will this be implemented in the borough?*

## **Reply**

Although Merton initially expressed interest in joining a London trial, as discussions progressed the neighbouring boroughs of Sutton, Kingston, Croydon and Wandsworth all decided not to join at this time. We consider that a scheme would be more likely to succeed if a number of adjoining boroughs take part so scooter users can travel further afield. Therefore the Council has decided not to join the London scheme. We also have some concerns about the safety of electric scooters.

The London trial is being led by Transport for London and is now expected to start in early 2021, subject various legal issues being resolved and the Department for Transport approval. The trial will last for a minimum 12 months and should the government decide to legalise e-scooters post trial then the Council will need to consider now best to manage both hire providers and privately owned e-scooters on the public highway.

### **9. John Braithwaite**

#### **To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport**

*What data has the council collected/will be collecting on the reasons for people driving in the borough, particularly at peak times, to inform future actions to reduce congestion & air pollution?*

## **Reply**

The Council does not hold or collect origin and destination data for motorists in the borough or driving through the borough.

### **10. Daniela Tilbrook**

**To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport**

*The council have declared a climate emergency. Will Merton council ask staff not to drive into work? With public transport capacity significantly down it would be a wonderful example if council staff walked, cycled or scooted to work. To work together to ease our congested roads.*

**Reply**

In the current pandemic the Council is encouraging all staff who can work from home to do so thus limiting the spread of the virus. This shift to home or 'Smart' working [on site as well as at home] has been successful and this approach will continue. Where staff do need to attend the office we are encouraging them not to drive whilst recognising that for some there is no alternative.

Prior to Covid the Council had just updated the staff travel plan which sought to reduce the number of staff driving to and using cars whilst at work in order to reduce Carbon emissions and improve air quality. Covid 19 has added an extra urgency to this work since we know that for the foreseeable future the public transport system is operating at reduced capacity and we cannot have all staff returning to work by car.

The Council is therefore doing what it can to support staff working from home and reducing the use of the motor car. We are supporting the expansion of cycle storage at our main sites and promoting the cycle to work scheme. The Council has also invested in a number of electric bicycles which staff can use at work to undertake their business.

We are exploring further expansions of shared Electric vehicles recognising that some staff will need to use a car at work for efficiency and safety but we are doing all we can to reduce the use of private petrol or diesel cars for commuting and use at work.

**11. Ursula Faulkner**

**To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport**

*What action is the Council taking to facilitate residents, including home owners, landlords and tenants, taking advantage of the availability of government funding for energy saving improvements to homes?*

**Reply**

Merton Council is part of a consortium bid with the Greater London Authority for Green Homes Grant Funding. The Council will encourage uptake of individual vouchers through the Council's social media and engagement with local housing associations. More information is available on the government website <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-the-green-homes-grant-scheme>.

We would come government extending the grant scheme for homeowners beyond the current March 2021 deadline to give our residents more time to access this opportunity.

**12. Tamara Kohler**

**To the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health**

*Given that the redevelopment of the Wilson Health Centre was originally planned to open its doors in June 2020, can the council provide an update on the progression of the redevelopment including projected re-opening date?*

**Reply**

The revised opening date for the centre is late 2022 but this date is subject to review as SWL CCG continues to explore capital funding options. We will continue to push the CCG to abide by its stated commitment to the project, and to provide future updates on request.

**13. Emma Maddison**

**To the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance / Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Education**

*Please confirm what percentage of schools across the borough are currently utilizing food waste collection? For those not currently utilizing this service, please outline how the council is working with those schools, the caterers and Veolia to ensure there are no barriers preventing schools from fully recycling their food waste.*

**Reply**

In line with the government's required scheme for schools, waste is a delegated service so the responsible of schools rather than the council centrally. However, the council operates a successful central school meals contract, for which 90% of primary and special schools buy into. A stipulation of this is that there is a specific food waste collection.

**Supplementary**

I'd like to ask the Council in my supplementary question; of the 90% of primary and special schools who have bought into the central schools meals contract, how many are currently recycling, actively recycling less than 50% of their food waste? Also if the Council doesn't currently have that information available will they undertake to source that information and make it publicly available?

**Reply**

Thank you, as in our written response, you'll see this is the responsibility of schools and you'll see that we do try to encourage schools to reduce food waste by

stipulating it wherever we can in those central contracts. As far as I'm aware it's nothing something that we actively monitor and I'm not even sure it's something schools can actively easily monitor themselves I imagine it would actually most easily be done by the central company providing the school meals. I'm not going to commit here that they are going to be able to provide that information but I'm happy to look into it for you.

**14. Matt Bird**

**To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport**

*As a resident of Haydon Park Road I would like to ask Merton council to urgently address the high levels of traffic that cut through this residential road causing pollution, road rage instances, speeding and congestion on a daily basis. Can my road be designated as a low traffic neighbourhood?*

**Reply**

The Council has put forward a bid to TFL for funding to deliver a Low Traffic Neighbourhood in Haydons Park Road.

This project was highlighted in our consultation and subsequent Active & Healthy Travel Response to Covid-19. We expect an announcement on funding this month. If successful, delivery will be programmed towards the end of 2020.

**15. Gillian Tame**

**To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport**

*Would be grateful to know when Haydon Park Road will become a LTN and what steps you will take to achieve this.*

**Reply**

The Council has put forward a bid to TFL for funding to deliver a Low Traffic Neighbourhood in Haydons Park Road.

This project was highlighted in our consultation and subsequent Active & Healthy Travel Response to Covid-19. We expect an announcement on funding this month. If successful, delivery will be programmed towards the end of 2020.

**16. Andrew Boyce**

**To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport**

*Council has been in receipt of S106 monies from the Spur House development for some years with assurances from the 2014-18 Abbey councillors that it would be used for enhancements to The Path and Morden Road. Why have the current administration's Abbey councillors failed to prioritise delivery of this scheme?*

## **Reply**

S106 Funding was earmarked to provide street trees in Morden Road.

Due the number and location of underground utilities, it was not possible to deliver this project. Local Councillors agreed that the funds could go towards public realm upgrades of the Path and Milner Rd instead. The Council consulted on designs early 2020 for planned delivery this summer. The s106 funding was topped up with TFL LIP funding to deliver a wider-ranging scheme of improvements. (this funding was subsequently halted by TFL in March 2020).

The Council remains committed to delivering the schemes at the Path and Milner Rd; however our staff resources are focused on the Covid transport projects which are a priority at present. The works will be revisited early 2021.

## **Supplementary**

Thank you Madam Mayor and I thank the cabinet member for the answer to my question. The funding from these developments has been available to the Council for a number of years now and it doesn't take that length of time to work out that you can't put some trees with their underground utilities. So my supplementary question is this; Is it not rather immoral that this Council should use a global health crisis as the latest in a long line of excuses for not taking action on this project?

## **Reply**

I'd like to thank him for his supplementary question. Clearly Covid has had a major impact on the Council over the past few months and has been a priority. In terms of section 106 here, we have obviously worked very closely and liaised with the three abbey councillors in terms of how this is spent these resources and finding a way to do these things in this area.

### **17. Eve Cohen**

#### **To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport**

*What measures has the Council introduced in Abbey Ward to support social distancing, particularly given the case and infection rates of Covid-19 are now on the rise across London?*

## **Reply**

Abbey ward has benefited from pavement widening on Merton High Street as well as cycle lane upgrades on Merton High Street to link up with Colliers Wood High Street. Three schools in Abbey ward are also within the School Street programme.

### **18. Sara Sharp**

#### **To the Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Education**

*What are the Abbey Ward councillors' current priorities for South Wimbledon?*

**Reply**

Abbey is a busy ward, with a large number of significant developments underway and further ones proposed. It has some of the areas with the highest levels of deprivation in Wimbledon, with 14% of children living in low income families, compared with 4% in neighbouring Merton Park. In this context, my priorities are to:

- Promoting and supporting the services and opportunities that work with the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups in our community, including helping to secure additional funding for such services (from Merton but also other funders).
- Ensure local residents are kept fully updated about and consulted with on any proposed developments - be they buildings, road changes, other services changing and so on.
- Feeding back residents' views to those responsible for setting the strategy and leading individual projects.
- Supporting volunteer-led community initiatives, both directly in terms of volunteering and ensuring that they are being supported by the Council.

Source for deprivation data: 2016 data from:

<https://data.merton.gov.uk/deprivation/report/view/e6e21fd8bfb84f3488078a5a85b2d387/E05000459>

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