

## **1. From: Jonathan Foster**

### **To the Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration and the Climate Emergency**

Why has an assisted Living home for clients with mental health issues and challenging behaviours been allowed to open in Wydell Close Morden? Especially as it is in a semi detached home and in a small close?

### **Reply**

Supported living schemes of the type set up at Wydell Close are not required to be registered with the Council and there is also no requirement on service providers to seek agreement from the Council to open such a service. The registering authority is the Care Quality Commission. In this instance, the service provider's main location is at an address in Croydon, and this is where the Care Quality Commission registration relates to. It is not uncommon, however, for supported living providers to operate services in other locations that do not need to be separately registered with the CQC as is the case here.

There may, depending on the nature of the property, be a need for the service provider or landlord to seek an HMO licence in relation to the property, but in this instance the property in question was already licensed with the Council, so no new application was required.

Since the Council became aware of the concerns raised by neighbours about the use of the property as a supported living scheme officers have been working with the service provider, the CQC and other parties to resolve those concerns. The current situation is that the supported living provider has no individuals placed with them at the Wydell Close property and the Council has placed a temporary suspension on any new admissions to the scheme, which has been formally communicated to the service provider and to all other London boroughs. Further work is being undertaken to address the various concerns raised and to determine the future of the scheme and neighbours will be kept informed as this work progresses.

## **2. From: Barry Smith**

### **To the Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration and the Climate Emergency**

What percentage of residents' car parking permits are currently for electric vehicles, and how does the council plan to increase this number?

### **Reply**

Approximately 1% of resident permits are for electric vehicles (EV). Measures to increase EV uptake include the £20 EV parking permit and roll-out of lamp column chargers in residential areas for people without private off-street parking. 90 lamp column chargers have been installed in recent months and a bid is being submitted for Government funding for additional chargers in the next year. We are awaiting the Transport for London EV Charging Infrastructure strategy and delivery plan for the city,

which is due this Autumn. This publication will inform our Merton EV strategy for 2022, subject to LIP monies being available.

**3. From: Marguerite Landells  
To the Cabinet Member for Children and Education**

Why does year 6 at Hillcross have 37 pupils this year? Is there are any chance (understanding that funding isn't set) this may happen in other years in the school? The reason we have been given is funding.

**Reply**

The general background to this is that after an unprecedented 35% increase in pupil numbers in the 11 years to 2017/18 and the requirement to provide for an extensive expansion programme, the position changed in around 2016. This change had not been forecast in any of the national or London-based population or school roll projections. 2017/18 was the peak in primary school numbers and now the council and schools are needing to manage falling demand for primary school places.

While the greatest impact has been on reception year intakes there has also been a gradual loss of pupils through the year groups - for example, the 2020/21 Year 6 school roll was some 12% lower across Merton than when that year group was in reception.

Hillcross is rated Good by Ofsted, and expanded to three forms in 20xx in response to the growth outline. It is now one example of a school managing a declining pupil population in the context of the national funding formula meaning schools are funded almost wholly on a per-pupil basis, providing very little flexibility when pupil numbers change, and therefore needing to organise themselves to meet a balanced budget while still maintaining and raising standards. They are more impacted by some schools in being at the difficult middle ground of needing to have large class sizes for 2-forms, but insufficient roll for 3-forms. Therefore the only options open to them are: to merge classes within years, thereby increasing class sizes; to merge classes between years, maintaining smaller classes but with mixed year groups in one class; or to continue as they, and risk going into deficit and all the consequences of that.

As a local authority, given the national policy of a parental preference based system, it is not possible to move pupils between schools or direct which schools pupils join in Reception. However, we have assisted schools, including Hillcross, to cap individual year groups to manage class sizes in the best way possible. Wherever possible, we encourage schools to have admission numbers be multiples of 30. However, it is hard to manage this where there are changes in the population of older year groups. Class sizes should be considered in the context of all the support staff associated with the class, not just the teacher. In the context of Hillcross they have increased the number of support staff to the affected year groups, ensuring that there is at least one member of support staff allocated to each of the Y4, Y5 and Y6 teams (classes) – previously there were only two support staff working across Y5 and Y6 combined; and two working

across Y3 and Y4 combined. Class teams will work together in a range of ways including team teaching, working with targeted groups and ensuring children receive catch up sessions where appropriate. Council school improvement officers therefore support the school in implementing a strategy that has pupils' achievement at the heart, with staff numbers comparable to any equivalent school, but ensures the school can meet a balanced budget, which is being set by the national funding formula.

According to the last school census, in Merton there were six schools plus Hillcross with a class size over 30, all with one teacher and one assistant, though numbers were 34 or below. The council has not done any local research on the impact but as per Hillcross' letter to parents in July, the Educational Endowment Foundation measure the impact of small class sizes as relatively low in comparison to feedback, collaborative learning and metacognition.

In summary, while we can understand the concerns of a headline class of 37, given the changes in the pupil population schools have limited options when it comes to balancing their budgets, and have to make sensible decisions that are right for their school. Hillcross School has a carefully worked out plan by the school that has the support of the council school improvement officers.

#### **4. From: Mrs Peyton**

#### **To the Cabinet Member for Children and Education**

Can the council please explain the reason/s why pupils in year 6 at Hillcross primary school will be taught in classes of **37 pupils** in academic year 2021/22 and whether there is an opportunity for you to help reduce this and make year 6 a 3-form entry?

#### **Reply**

The general background to this is that after an unprecedented 35% increase in pupil numbers in the 11 years to 2017/18 and the requirement to provide for an extensive expansion programme, the position changed in around 2016. This change had not been forecast in any of the national or London-based population or school roll projections. 2017/18 was the peak in primary school numbers and now the council and schools are needing to manage falling demand for primary school places.

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**5. From: Roy England**

**To the Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration and the Climate  
Emergency**

359-361 Kingston Road: Why has no enforcement action been taken in respect of what are breaches of planning conditions?

## Reply

Planning permission was granted under ref. 19/P0808 on 14 November 2019 for the following development: Demolition of existing retail and workshop. Erection of a 5 storey building containing A1, A2 AND A3 use and residential units. Consisting of 7 x two bedroom and 2 x one bedroom self contained flats. Associated car parking and service areas at ground level.

The permission was subject to a number of conditions requiring the submission of additional information before works could commence (pre-commencement conditions).

In March 2021 the Council became aware that some works to demolish and clear the site had commenced and following site visits by the Planning Enforcement Team in May 2021 the developer's agent agreed that he would submit a discharge of conditions application and that works would stop until the relevant conditions were discharged.

A condition discharge application was submitted on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2021, which sought to discharge all the pre-commencement conditions:

- 3 (MATERIALS)
- 4 (REFUSE AND RECYCLING),
- 8 (NOISE),
- 13 (SURFACE WATER DRAINAGE),
- 15 (DEMOLITION AND CONSTRUCTIONS LOGISTIC PLAN),
- 16 (NOISE),
- 19 (SOUNDPROOFING),
- 20 (CONTAMINATION),
- 22 (SCREENING TO ROOF TERRACES) &
- 29 (LANDSCAPING AND PLANTING)

However, the submission was lacking in important information needed to satisfy the requirements of the conditions, for the following reasons:

- Refuse and recycling collection arrangements require a large Council refuse vehicle to reverse into the service road which would not be acceptable. Further clarification and revision to this arrangement is required (condition 4).
- No surface water drainage plan has been submitted and the proposal does not meet the London Plan policy requirements in relation to runoff attenuation and rates Condition 13).
- The submitted demolition and construction logistics plan includes delivery times which coincide with peak hours and therefore further clarification and revision to this arrangement is required (condition 15).

- No details of soundproofing between the commercial units and residential units has been provided (condition 19).

The planning and enforcement service have made a number of attempts to contact the agent including an email dated 13 August to inform them that there were problems with the servicing arrangements proposed and that no further works should take place until such time as the pre-commencement conditions had been discharged. No response was received.

The Council's Planning Enforcement Officer have continued, without success to make contact by way of telephone calls and email. The Council has now written to the agent on 7<sup>th</sup> September to inform them of the continuing concerns relating to surface water drainage and delivery hours proposed and set out that a dialogue must be opened on this matter within the next 7 days or the Council would take formal enforcement action. Therefore, on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2021 if the developer has failed to contact the Council to resolve the outstanding matters to the satisfaction of the Council, the Council will consider taking enforcement action, which could include the serving of a Temporary Stop Notice ([section 171E of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990](#)) which would require that an activity which is a breach of planning control should stop immediately.

## **6. From: Paula England**

### **To the Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration and the Climate Emergency**

Why was no enforcement action taken in respect of this vehicle during May 2020 to December 2020 when the vehicle was both driven and parked on the public highway? COVID is not an excuse for inaction given the length of time and the lifting of restrictions from time to time. *(vehicle details and location supplied)*

### **Reply**

As Ms England has identified, 31 PCNs were issued to the vehicle registration she has referred to, from 22 May 2020 to December 2020. However, this vehicle was not parked on public highway but on private land. The enforcement of PCNs is a statutory process and must be adhered to at the risk of committing a procedural impropriety which could invalidate the PCNs issued.

As a result of the pandemic, and lockdown, and the subsequent introduction of emergency legislation, a number of the normal statutory processes were unable to take place within the usual time frames, and some of the emergency legislation specifically prohibited the enforcement of warrants by enforcement agents.

As matters now stand, warrants have been issued for all but one of the 31 PCNs and these cases are now with the enforcement agents to enforce. The legislation that grants authorities the civil enforcement powers to enforce parking restrictions places a legal requirement on the authority to only request the details of the vehicle owner at least 28

days after a PCN has been issued to the vehicle. The enforcing authority is legally obliged to do this for every single PCN issued to a vehicle. It is illegal for an enforcing authority to obtain the vehicle keeper details from another source e.g another PCN.

Only the DVLA can take enforcement action in relation to a lack of tax or SORN declaration, and potentially the police could take action against a vehicle for a lack of tax or insurance. The council's abandoned vehicles officer visited this site, but advised that the vehicle was in a good state of repair, and as such, had no powers to take any action.

The London Borough of Merton does not have any arrangements in place other than the data transfer files requesting and receiving keeper details, which is an automated process. Civil Enforcement Officers (CEO) do not have a facility to check a vehicles tax or insurance or MOT details as this is not something that they can enforce.

The London Borough of Merton does not have a car pound, nor do we operate a towing service. As previously advised, as the enforcement of these issues has to follow a statutory process, we are not allowed to immobilise a vehicle until warrants have been issued, and that is only after the enforcement agents have sent an Enforcement Notice to the vehicle owner. As previously advised, emergency legislation prevented the enforcement of warrants until August / September 2020, and the London Borough of Merton enforcement agents did not start operating again until mid-October 2020.

We will, however, continue to explore how we can further improve services to ensure our highways are not despoiled by abandoned vehicles.

#### **7. From: Richard Poole**

#### **To the Cabinet Member for Children and Education**

To what extent have past and current policies of the council contributed to Hillcross primary school needing to teach year 6 in class sizes of 37 pupils in the academic year 2021/22?

#### **Reply**

The general background to this is that after an unprecedented 35% increase in pupil numbers in the 11 years to 2017/18 and the requirement to provide for an extensive expansion programme, the position changed in around 2016. This change had not been forecast in any of the national or London-based population or school roll projections. 2017/18 was the peak in primary school numbers and now the council and schools are needing to manage falling demand for primary school places.

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population in the context of the national funding formula meaning schools are funded almost wholly on a per-pupil basis, providing very little flexibility when pupil numbers change, and therefore needing to organise themselves to meet a balanced budget while still maintaining and raising standards. They are more impacted by some schools in being at the difficult middle ground of needing to have large class sizes for 2-forms, but insufficient roll for 3-forms. Therefore the only options open to them are: to merge classes within years, thereby increasing class sizes; to merge classes between years, maintaining smaller classes but with mixed year groups in one class; or to continue as they, and risk going into deficit and all the consequences of that.

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**8. From: Corinne Garrod  
To the Cabinet Member for Children and Education**

Do any other primary schools in Merton have class sizes over 30 with one teacher and one member of support staff and if so, how has this affected the academic performance of that year group/school and the mentality of the children?

**Reply**

The general background to this is that after an unprecedented 35% increase in pupil numbers in the 11 years to 2017/18 and the requirement to provide for an extensive expansion programme, the position changed in around 2016. This change had not been forecast in any of the national or London-based population or school roll projections. 2017/18 was the peak in primary school numbers and now the council and schools are needing to manage falling demand for primary school places.

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**9. From: Gobi Sriparan**

**To the Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration and the Climate Emergency**

I have noticed that whilst the Council have completed refurbishment of Lower Morden Lane - works have only been completed for half of the street (from the Morden Brook pub to Hillcross School). When will the council conduct works on the remainder of Lower Morden Lane?

**Reply**

We cannot provide a definitive date as this is reviewed annually. The Council's highway investment programme is prioritised based on the underlying conditions of roads, surveyed by radar. The highest priority sections of carriageway are resurfaced to ensure that the boroughwide infrastructure is well maintained. In some cases, this means that only sections of road need replaced, rather than the entire length. For information, other sections of Lower Morden Lane have been resurfaced within the last 8 years. These sections with Lower Morden Lane that have been resurfaced are between Cardinal Avenue and no. 95 (resurfaced during February 2015) and Garth Road to Beverley Roundabout (resurfaced during July 2013).

**10. From: Andrew Cunningham**

**To the Cabinet Member for Local Environment and Green Spaces**

Can the Cabinet Member tell me what actions he has taken to prevent flooding in Lower Morden?

**Reply**

At the Merton Council Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2021, a report was presented providing an overview of the recent flooding incidents and actions

that the Council is taking, as well as other risk management authorities such as Thames Water and the Environment Agency. The Council pro-actively mitigates flood risk through a programme of high-risk gully cleansing, gully sensors, annual maintenance of drains, implementation of SuDS such as raingardens and is working with Thames Water to unblock and de-silt their drains using CCTV investigations of the infrastructure. In addition, the Council has undertaken flood risk investigations under section 19 of the flood & water management act.

The full report is available online. Please see page 17 onwards at: <https://democracy.merton.gov.uk/documents/g4011/Public%20reports%20pack%20Thursday%2002-Sep-2021%2019.15%20Sustainable%20Communities%20Overview%20and%20Scrutiny%20Panel.pdf?T=10>

**11. From: Laura Cox  
To the Cabinet Member for Children and Education**

What are projected primary school numbers for Merton schools in the coming years? If numbers are projected to decline, what is the LA strategy to ensure that children continue to receive high quality and well funded primary education?

**Reply**

After an unprecedented 35% increase in pupil numbers in the 11 years to 2017/18 (a rise of 4,367 from 12,683 to 17,050), 2017/18 was the peak in primary school numbers and we are now experiencing a significant fall, with a drop of 1,184 pupils (7%) to 2020/21.

Reception year numbers decreased in 2020/21 for the fifth consecutive year and, based on school admissions allocations, there is a further significant fall in the reception year in 2021/22. A further fall is forecast in future years, the extent of the further fall is dependent on the forecast model used. As the lower numbers flow to all year groups, the total primary school roll by the GLA forecast model is 15,108 in 2025/26, nearly 2,000 less than the 2017/18 peak. Our 'pupil retention' modelling suggests it will be 13,486, so 3,500 less than the 2017/18 peak. The last 18 months has been impacted by changing Covid-19 movement patterns and so there will be a need to be a regular review of demand.

The council has already facilitated the reduction in the published admission number by 10.5 from 2016 to the present 2021/22 reception year entry. However, if the council is to be within the 'ideal' surplus places level of 5% then a reduction by a further 9.5 forms of entry in reception year is required by 2025/26.

The broad strategy is as follows:

- Continue to encourage schools to reduce admissions numbers to multiples of 30 for education efficiency when practical to do so

- Encourage schools to work in cluster areas with the council to agree reductions in admission numbers at an area level
- Consider use of compatible alternative uses for space where appropriate such as primary age SEND Additional Resourced Provision when it can be agreed with schools
- Where appropriate consider alternative models to operate schools for school improvement and to manage a balanced budget e.g. hard and soft federations
- No plans to close schools

A detailed paper is being presented to Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 29 September 2021

**12: From: Luana Baldwin**

**To the Cabinet Member for Children and Education**

Does Council have any plans to intervene financially or otherwise to reduce class sizes in year 6 at Hillcross primary? I would like to know why Hillcross seems to be the only school in the Borough faced with such large numbers and if Council will be assisting in any way?

**Reply**

The general background to this is that after an unprecedented 35% increase in pupil numbers in the 11 years to 2017/18 and the requirement to provide for an extensive expansion programme, the position changed in around 2016. This change had not been forecast in any of the national or London-based population or school roll projections. 2017/18 was the peak in primary school numbers and now the council and schools are needing to manage falling demand for primary school places.

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**13 From: Kevin Clarke  
To the Cabinet Member for Finance**

There is currently a polling places review. Given recent progress, in line with government advice, in reducing the use of schools as polling places is there a target date to find alternative arrangements throughout the borough?

**Reply**

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England has recently undertaken an Electoral Review of the London Borough of Merton ward arrangements. As a result of the review, there have been alterations to the current ward boundaries which require changes to the Polling Districts within them. Therefore, Merton is undertaking a review of its polling districts and also the location of polling places/stations for use at both

national and local elections to mirror the changes to the ward boundaries. The changes to the Wards and Polling Districts will come into force at the Local Council Elections on 5 May 2022. Local political parties, MPs and Councillors have been consulted and views were also invited from residents, disability groups and other stakeholders.

The formal consultation period began on Monday 2 August 2021, and closed on Monday 13 September 2021. Details of any representations received will be made available for inspection and will be published on the website at the conclusion of the review. The outcome of the review will be reported to Standards and General Purposes Committee and then full Council in November for decision to enable the Electoral Registration Officer to make any alterations necessary to the register of electors in good time to prepare for the May 2022 elections.

In accordance with the requirements of section 18C of the Representation of the People Act 1983 (as amended by section 17 of the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013), polling district reviews must be held every 5 years from the date of the last review. However, in practice, polling places are reviewed on a far more regular basis, and in line with government advice, finding alternatives to schools as polling places is an ongoing target.

Merton Council has remained proactive in attempting to find replacement venues for schools that are used as polling stations, and this was the basis for the previous full polling district review that was conducted in 2019. Based on The Returning Officer's current proposals, (unless there are any amendments in response to representations which have been received) the council will be using 8 schools as polling stations in 2022, which has been reduced from over 20 schools that were used back in 2014. The guidance from the Department of Education advises that where schools are the only viable option in an area, the Head Teacher should look for a way of allowing the school to remain open whilst also being used as a polling station. Where the council is proposing to continue to use a school as a polling place, there is no suitable alternative that we know of in the vicinity. Therefore the above guidance would apply, and we would ask the Head Teacher if they can look for a way of allowing the school to remain open.

**14. From: Robert Kennedy  
To the Cabinet Member for Local Environment and Green Spaces**

For many years the Community have wished for a walk around Wimbledon Park lake in line with the agreement within the Land Registry title document dated 23rd December 1993. Now golf ceases completely in January 2023, what progress has been made in the implementation of the walk around the lake?

## **Reply**

The council's 2018 Wimbledon Park masterplan recognises the community's ambition of increased public access around the Wimbledon Park Lake. The council owns about a third of the lake boundary and the All England Lawn Tennis Club own about two thirds of the lake boundary. The All England Lawn Tennis Club has recently applied for to the council for outline planning permission (reference 21/P2900) which includes the provision of increased public access around the lake. The council, in its role as Local Planning Authority, will consider this planning application in due course.

### **15. From: Danielle Edie**

#### **To the Cabinet Member for Children and Education**

Has any consideration been given towards health and safety/teachers and pupils mental health? Teachers have done a fantastic job can you explain the thought process of giving a teacher a class of 30 plus pupils and assure us they won't have a mental breakdown dealing with large volumes of pupils?

## **Reply**

The Council is working with schools to address issues related to the health and wellbeing of both staff and pupils.

School staff have faced many challenges over the past year and leaders have had their wellbeing at heart as they have undertaken risk assessments for the school, and supported and reassured individual members of staff.

This is also in the context of Ofsted now including teacher workload and wellbeing within the matters they look at when schools are inspected.

Where class sizes are larger, leaders will be mindful of the wellbeing of staff, and look to ensure they are well supported, including by perhaps working in larger staff teams. This would include ensuring there are support staff working alongside teachers.

With regards to children and young people: we are very concerned about the rise in mental health issues amongst them. We were seeing a rise in mental health concerns pre-pandemic. We are now seeing heightened concerns for those children who were already suffering, but also a rise in young people's anxiety because of the pandemic.

The council is working closely with the CCG and partners to develop a new approach to mental health in Merton, called 'i-Thrive'. This is a culture change involving the expansion of service provided to children and young people at different levels of identified risk.

To support this approach we have developed new partnerships of schools and colleges. The partnerships work together to develop whole school models to support good mental

wellbeing. This approach is supported by a mental health in schools team that support low-level issues. We now have four such partnerships in Merton led by Ursuline Secondary School, South Thames College, Cricket Green and Hillcross School. The aim is that by 2023 all schools in Merton will be in such a partnership or cluster, and we are well on the way to achieving this. This has been supported through successful bids for additional government funding and increased CCG funding for young people's mental health.

In addition, the CCG have commissioned a range of additional mental health support from the KOOTH app, through which young people can access support 24/7 on their phones from 'Off the Record', which accepts direct referrals from young people on line and face to face.

A significant concern that young people have told us about is their anxiety about having missed so much education. We have been working with schools on their catch up and recovery curriculums to support children's wellbeing as they return to schools.

St George's Mental Health Trust has also now developed an out-of-hours crisis line. The lead clinician outlined this service to schools at the termly mental health leads forum and promotional materials were circulated before the summer.

The development of the i-Thrive model involves cultural change over time. Work is ongoing to pilot more targeted support for young people who have experienced trauma. We are also in the process of a surveying and listening exercise with young people, hearing their views, through a borough wide youth survey. This will inform the next developments of services to support our young people.

## **16. From: Caroline Poole**

### **To the Cabinet Member for Children and Education**

Does the council have any plans to intervene financially or otherwise to reduce the class sizes in years 5 and 6 at Hillcross Primary School?

### **Reply**

The general background to this is that after an unprecedented 35% increase in pupil numbers in the 11 years to 2017/18 and the requirement to provide for an extensive expansion programme, the position changed in around 2016. This change had not been forecast in any of the national or London-based population or school roll projections. 2017/18 was the peak in primary school numbers and now the council and schools are needing to manage falling demand for primary school places.

While the greatest impact has been on reception year intakes there has also been a gradual loss of pupils through the year groups - for example, the 2020/21 Year 6 school roll was some 12% lower across Merton than when that year group was in reception.



Hillcross is one example of a school managing this in the context of the national funding formula meaning schools are largely funded with even less flexibility based on pupil numbers, and therefore needing to organise themselves to meet a balanced budget as well as raise standards. They are more impacted by some schools in being at the difficult middle ground of needing to have large class sizes for 2-forms, but insufficient roll for 3-forms. Nationally we have a parental preference based system so it is not possible to direct pupils from other schools. However, we have assisted schools, including Hillcross, to cap individual year groups to manage class sizes in the best way possible.

Class sizes should be considered in the context of all the support staff associated with the class, not just the teacher. In the context of Hillcross they are ensuring that there is at least one member of support staff allocated to each of the Y4, Y5 and Y6 teams (classes) – previously there were only two support staff working across Y5 and Y6 combined; and two working across Y3 and Y4 combined. Class teams will work together in a range of ways including team teaching, working with targeted groups and ensuring children receive catch up sessions where appropriate. Council school improvement officers therefore support the school in implementing a strategy that has pupils' achievement at the heart, with staff numbers comparable to any equivalent school, but ensures the school can meet a balanced budget, which is being set by national formula.

According to the last school census, in Merton there were six schools plus Hillcross with a class size over 30, all with one teacher and one assistant, though numbers were 34 or below. The council has not done any local research on the impact but as per Hillcross' letter to parents in July, the Educational Endowment Foundation measure the impact of small class sizes as relatively low in comparison to feedback, collaborative learning and metacognition.

In summary, while we can understand the concerns of a headline class of 37, it is a parent led preference system for schools and so schools have to manage with the numbers that are allocated. Hillcross School has a carefully worked out plan by the school that has the support of the council school improvement officers.

**17. From: Joseph Hackett**

**To the Cabinet Member for Local Environment and Green Spaces**

What action has been taken since the Conservative West Barnes action team handed in their petition, signed by 231 concerned local residents, to clean up West Barnes and Motspur Park?

**Reply**

We acknowledge the concerns raised by the Conservative West Barnes action team.

Our Neighbourhood Client team regularly monitor these areas along with joint inspection with Veolia's Environment Managers. The information is collated by the service provider

and, if required, the schedule can be amended in order that the streets are cleaned to a required frequency to ensure that they do not fall below grade.

Regarding West Barnes Lane and the daily presentation of domestic waste, I have asked for this to be investigated and action taken to ensure the required standard is met. With respect to the commercial bins at this location, we will be contacting the business and managing agents to ensure that these are removed from the highway outside of the day of collection.

**18. From: Frank Pocock  
To the Cabinet Member for Local Environment and Green Spaces**

How often are the grass verges cut and weeds cleared from the gutters in Cannon Hill?

**Reply**

In reference to the management and control of weeds, our street cleansing contractor undertake a borough wide weed spray 3 times a year at seasonal intervals. To support this Veolia have implemented a neighbourhood approach to deliver the street cleaning operations. Each neighbourhood has an associated team of Veolia operatives and an Environmental Manager overseeing and co-ordinating their work. This approach contributes towards building knowledge and a sense of pride amongst the neighbourhood team. The Environmental Managers become familiar with the requirements of the area and apply their resources accordingly.

The contract requires Veolia to maintain a consistent standard of cleanliness across the whole borough in line with best practice from Defra's Code of Practice. This approach measures the contractor based on their output rather than the amount of resources they use or the frequency at which they clean the streets and remove any detritus and weed growth. In order to achieve the required standard, the contractor is required to apply whatever resources, at whatever frequency, are required to maintain the necessary contractual standards. In practice, this means the contractor will apply more resources to town centres than residential areas even though the contract requires the streets in both areas to be maintained to the same standard.

The council's ground maintenance contractor idverde UK Ltd maintains the grass verges on a cyclical basis, according to schedules which are being adhered to and managed regularly. There was some growth due to the warm and wet weather during the Spring and early summer and this is being managed. There are officers in the Cannon Hill ward weekly assessing the cleanliness of the streets and the condition of the verges and reporting where there are areas of improvement and liaising direct with the service supervisor.

**19. From: Calum McGrath**

**To the Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration and the Climate Emergency**

Why did the council fail to ensure that step free access was brought in at Haydons Road station as part of the 1 Caxton Road planning application?

**Reply**

The Council has followed up with the developer of 1 Caxton Road who is, and has been, willing to enable step-free access to Haydons Road Station. The project is halted due to an objection from Govia Thameslink who manage the Station. Thameslink are unwilling to manage new gated access to the station. The Council has written to Thameslink challenging their stance as it fails to serve our residents or support Local and national policies to improve access to public transport and are seeking a meeting with representatives from Govia Thameslink.

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