

Committee: Council

Date: 17 November 2021

Subject: Petitions

Lead officer: Louise Round, Managing Director South London Legal Partnership

Lead member: Leader of the Council, Councillor Mark Allison

Contact officer: Democratic Services, democratic.services@merton.gov.uk

Recommendation:

1. That Council receive petitions (if any) in accordance with Part 4A, paragraph 18.1 of the Council's Constitution.
 2. That Council notes the responses provided to the petitions submitted at the meeting held on 15 September 2021.
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1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. This report invites Council to receive petitions in accordance with Part 4A, paragraph 18.1 of the Council's Constitution.

2 DETAILS

- 2.1. At the meeting held on 15 September 2021, the petitions listed below were submitted and the responses are set out below. Any petitions received by Council are referred to respective departments with responsible officers asked to advise the presenting member in each case of the way in which the petition is to be progressed.
- 2.2. Petition One: A petition was submitted by Councillor Holden on flooding. The petition text and the officer responses are set out below.

Petition Wording:

Recent heavy thunderstorms have caused flooding (again) to Raynes Park and other areas across Merton. We are fed up being told these are '1 in 30-year' events when in fact it is every year. We think that Merton Council and Thames Water should take action to reduce flooding across Merton, if you think they should then please sign our petition so we can help force some action.

We the undersigned think Merton Council and Thames Water should:

Recognise there is a problem, and that heavy rainfall events are now regular occurring events

Officer Response:

Yes, we agree that summer storms and heavy downpours are more frequently occurring events due to the changes in the climate being felt in Merton, London-wide and globally. We have developed a strategic flood risk assessment including an online map to help identify places that are at risk from flooding from all sources, due to our changing climate and to mitigate those risks. The map uses the latest flood risk data available and includes allowances for climate change in line with the latest projections for our changing climate.

Petition Wording:

Build up better storm drainage capacity in the low-lying areas of Merton

Officer Response

The council is continuing to work closely with Thames Water to build up better drainage and sewer capacity in parts of Merton. This includes:

- Undertaking feasibility schemes in Critical Drainage Areas such as in Wimbledon Park/Southfields in partnership with Wandsworth Council to identify solutions to reduce flood risk from various sources.*
- Construction of green Infrastructure solutions such as raingardens in a various locations across the borough to increase storage capacity and to divert water away from the sewer network.*
- Thames Water, the Environment Agency and Merton Council considering how to make more effective use of the existing flood risk assets, such as through improving the flood storage capacity of the Derwent flood storage area near the Beverley and Pyl Brooks off Grand Drive SW20.*
- Supporting Thames Water in relaying surface water sewers with larger capacity pipes where appropriate, such as in Cottenham Park.*
- Submitting bids to the Environment Agency and Thames Water for attenuation (increase water storage) and green infrastructure solutions.*
- Supporting Thames Water to facilitate inspection and cleaning their sewers in Raynes Park town centre.*
- Identification of solutions to help reduce the risk of foul sewer flooding from Thames Water's Abbott Avenue pump station to ensure that storage upstream of the pump station is maximised during heavy rainfall.*
- Supporting Thames Water's installation of a surface water pumping station at Elm Grove.*

Petition Wording

Undertake a borough-wide deep clean of all drains and gutters, so they are freeflowing and not blocked.

Officer Response

All of Merton's drains and gullies are cleaned under several programmes of works, as set out below. We are now increasing the use of 4G smart sensors in the

Council's gullies, which tell us in real time if the gully is starting to become blocked or silted. This means we can prioritise attending site and cleaning gullies that are silted or blocked without having to send someone to check all 17,500 gullies in Merton. The gullies are cleaned by:

- *The annual high risk gully cleaning programme, that focusses on the 10,000 out of 17,000 gullies in Merton that are susceptible to any form of flood risk based on extensive data such as frequency of recent flood events, measurement of silt before and after the previous cleaning, areas at risk of flooding from all sources as identified in Merton's online strategic flood risk assessment map or previously reported issues . As part of the high risk gully cleaning programme we measure the levels of silt in the gullies before cleaning to help inform future planned work.*
- *The ad hoc gully programme where anyone can report a gully they believe to be blocked on our website and the cleaning crew will attend site to fix it.*
- *The borough-wide cyclical gully cleaning programme which cleans all gullies in every public road in Merton.*

Having a multi layered approach to gully cleaning means that gullies at most risk will be cleaned several times per year.

Petition Wording

Invest in some flood abatement technology to help limit rapid rainwater runoff

Officer Response

As well as requiring new developments in Merton to incorporate SuDS (Sustainable Drainage) an to limit rainwater runoff to greenfield rates (see response below) we are introducing measures such as raingardens on the council's pavements and public spaces to reduce rainwater runoff, to provide storage, improve amenity, improve air quality and increase biodiversity.

We are utilising Internet of Things technology advances such as through remotely monitored rain gauges, telemetry on river trash screens and the 4G gully sensors to measure silt levels.

Petition Wording

Increase tree and vegetation planting

Officer Response

As set out in Merton's Sustainable Drainage Design and Evaluation Guide 2018, the right planting in the right place can help to reduce surface water runoff and reduce flood risk. We are introducing raingardens in areas that are recognised as at risk of surface water flooding in Merton and we have applied to Thames Water for funding to support an extensive programme of sustainable drainage measures in the Raynes Park and Wimbledon Park catchment. We have also rolled out a number of parklets across the borough which have turned grey areas on the highway to green spaces for business use or the public.

The council also plants in its own parks, open spaces and highways and support initiatives such as Merton Garden Streets for additional planting on residential roads.

Through the planning system, we also require the installation of sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS) such as planters, swales, green or blue roofs for example, to make space for water and to increase urban greening.

Petition Wording

Strengthen planning policy to ensure more water hold-up devices are installed in homes & businesses across Merton to limit rainwater runoff.

Merton's existing and emerging planning policies already require all new developments to be designed to ensure greenfield runoff rates (post development) and Merton's Sustainable Drainage Design and Evaluation Guide 2018 provides a wealth of advice on solutions to achieve this.

Depending on the nature of development, achieving this will include both passive design measures (such as green space and soft landscaping) and active design measures to reduce runoff such as grey water recycling, rainwater harvesting and in some cases, underground storage solutions.

We encourage residents and businesses that own buildings that do not already have ways of limiting rainwater runoff installed to consider retrofitting SuDS measures suitable to their premises. Merton's Sustainable Drainage Design and Evaluation Guide provides useful guidance on potential retrofit solutions.

Create a special unit in the council to respond dynamically to flood events, for the benefit of residents and businesses.

Merton has a local flood risk management strategy, which sets out our plans and priority actions for managing flood risk across the borough. It explains which organisations are responsible for different types of flooding across Merton and how partners, such as the Environment Agency and Thames Water, are working together to reduce flood risk. Merton's Local Flood Risk Management Strategy second objective is to "Work with Risk Management Authorities and stakeholders to identify ways of managing flood risk in those areas at greatest risk within the borough".

As well as taking proactive actions with Thames Water and the Environment Agency to reduce flood risk, the council and its partners also have risk management responsibilities in the event of major incidents.

In the event of a severe level of flooding, the council's major incident plan which is a requirement under the Civil Contingencies Act, will be activated. The Council's Local Authority Liaison Officer (LALO) may be called out and will update the council Silver, who will lead on the coordination of our response.

The Civil Contingencies Act requires all category 1 responders to prepare plans to deal with Emergencies within their remit. London has a number of frameworks and high level plans as well as the Resilience Standards for London, which lay out our response requirements at both the regional and local level. This requires the council to respond dynamically to flood events for the benefit of residents and businesses.

There is no requirement for a special unit to respond to flooding as the response requirements are outlined in the various Frameworks, Plans and standards and anything specific would require a multi-agency approach, training and exercising over and above what is already required and in place.

The definition of emergency in the Act focuses on the consequences of emergencies. It defines an emergency as:

- *an event or situation which threatens serious damage to human welfare;*
- *an event or situation which threatens serious damage to the environment; or*
- *war, or terrorism, which threatens serious damage to security.*

The purpose of Part 1 of the Act is to establish a new statutory framework for civil protection at the local level. Local responders are the building block of resilience in the UK, and the Act will enhance existing arrangements by:

- *Establishing a clear set of roles and responsibilities for local responders;*
- *Giving greater structure and consistency to local civil protection activity; and*
- *Establishing a sound basis for performance management at a local level.*

The Act divides local responders into two categories depending on the extent of their involvement in civil protection work, and places a proportionate set of duties on each. Category 1 responders are those organisations at the core of emergency response (e.g. emergency services, local authorities). Category 1 responders are subject to the full set of civil protection duties.

They are required to:

- *Assess the risk of emergencies occurring and use this to inform contingency planning;*
- *Put in place emergency plans;*
- *Put in place Business Continuity Management arrangements;*
- *Put in place arrangements to make information available to the public about civil protection matters and maintain arrangements to warn, inform and advise the public in the event of an emergency;*
- *Share information with other local responders to enhance co-ordination;*
- *Co-operate with other local responders to enhance co-ordination and efficiency;*
and
- *Provide advice and assistance to businesses and voluntary organisations about business continuity management (Local Authorities only).*

2.3 Petition Two: a Petition was submitted by Councillor Fairclough on Graham Road Parking. The text of the petition and the officer response are set out below:

Petition Wording

Parking for residents in Graham Road is already very difficult every day of the week. Additionally, on Sunday, which is a normal trading day, visitors come to shop and eat in Wimbledon Town Centre all day, while restricted parking operates solely between 2–6 pm. Mixed meter and resident bays are in operation from the low numbers end of the road up

to 33 odd and 16 even house numbers. Meter parking at this end of the road has a knock-on impact on parking along the whole length of the road. Parking far away from one's home with young children, very heavy shopping or in the evening, when it is dark is a matter of concern for residents.

These challenges will be exacerbated when the Travelodge begins operation since the hotel will not provide parking facilities for its guests. Hotel guests are likely to park in Graham Road. There are three public car parks in the near vicinity behind Morrisons, Centre Court and the Fridge which cater for people visiting Wimbledon by car.

In view of the increasing difficulties the **undersigned residents in Graham Road propose and request that Graham Road becomes a residents only (and their visitors) parking area throughout the entire length of the road.**

Officer Response

We can confirm that the petition will be added to the Council's annual Parking Management Programme for assessment and a statutory consultation subject to Cabinet Member approval. Given the current available resource and workload, it is not possible to provide a time frame at this time, however we would look to schedule the changes to coincide with the re-opening of Graham Road (upon completion of the Travelodge Development).

2.4 Members are invited to present petitions at this meeting, and a response will be provided to the next ordinary Council meeting in February 2022.

3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

3.1. None for the purposes of this report.

4 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

4.1. None for the purpose of this report.

5 TIMETABLE

5.1. None for the purpose of this report.

6 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

6.1. None for the purpose of this report.

7 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

7.1. None for the purpose of this report.

8 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

8.1. None for the purpose of this report.

9 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

9.1. None for the purpose of this report.

10 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

11 APPENDICES

11.1. None

12 BACKGROUND PAPERS

12.1. None.

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