

**LONDON BOROUGH OF SUTTON  
COUNCIL MEETING: 25 APRIL 2016  
QUESTIONS: STANDING ORDER 8.6  
QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

**1 Question asked by Councillor Nick Mattey to Councillor Jill Whitehead, Chair of the Environment and Neighbourhood Committee**

Has a cost benefit analysis been carried out for the impact of the Viridor Incinerator in Beddington?

**Reply by Councillor Jill Whitehead**

A cost benefit analysis was carried out as part of the South London Waste Partnership evaluation of the Final Tender. As communicated previously, this will save the Partnership c.£200m over the term of the contract, with Sutton's share of this being c.£49 million.

**2 Question asked by Councillor David Hicks to Councillor Jayne McCoy, Chair of the Housing, Economy & Business Committee**

Along with some other Belmont and Sutton South residents and Councillors, I did not receive the postcard informing residents of the consultation over the Local Plan, Sutton 2031. As a result, I informed the Chief Executive and was asked to provide names and addresses of any resident that had been missed.

Since then, members of the Housing, Economy & Business Committee have received emails from residents, about the potential Kimpton Traveller site, claiming that they had not been informed of the consultation process by the Council.

The 2031 consultation is a fundamental element of the future development of the Local Plan for the Borough and I understand that the postcards were delivered by a private contractor. Considering the importance of the subject and the limited coverage of the Sutton Guardian, I expect that the Council undertook a process of audit and validation of the delivery.

Will the lead member please set out the detail of that validation process and the results?

**Reply by Councillor Jayne McCoy**

The postcards were distributed by a firm the Council has used previously to deliver postcards to the whole borough or various catchment areas in the borough. The firm in question were advised of the issues mentioned by Councillor Hicks which they have

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investigated. They report that they have checked their records and discussed the issue with the team supervisors responsible for delivery of the postcards. They have confirmed that they haven't had any problems reported about delivering the postcards.

It is possible that an individual address can be missed, due to human error, difficult access, blocked letterbox or other reasons. It is also possible that not all residents recall receiving the material or that it was collected and recycled by another member of the household, before the others had a chance to see it.

In addition to delivering an A5 postcard to every household the consultation on the Local Plan included multi-media channels with the express purpose of capturing comments from as many of our residents as possible. This included:-

1. Taking out a wraparound advertisement in the Sutton Guardian, explaining what the Local Plan is and where public meetings are being held.
2. Placing a public notice in the Sutton Guardian.
3. Issuing a press release.
4. Sending emails to residents' associations, amenity groups and business associations asking them to inform their members of the Sutton Local Plan Issues and Preferred Options document.
5. Sending emails to residents who had requested to be notified of planning policy changes.
6. Setting up a dedicated web page on the Council's website to inform residents of the consultation.
7. Placing paper copies of the consultation document in the Council offices in Sutton and Carshalton.
8. Placing paper copies of the consultation document in all the libraries across the borough, including the library at the Sutton Life Centre.
9. Using the Council's own consultation hub to enable residents to respond.
10. Using the Council's Facebook and Twitter accounts to publicise and re-publicise meetings and provide additional information.
11. Using other local Facebook accounts to provide information on the document and consultation.
12. Displaying posters on outdoor notice boards.
13. Displaying PVC banners in prominent locations in the borough.

In addition, officers arranged and attended 34 events, ranging from Local Committee meetings, special exhibitions and open meetings, together with specific meetings with

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particular stakeholder and under-represented groups (Age Concern, Scill, Youth Parliament and schools).

I am aware that the Chief Executive offered to provide you and any chairs of residents' associations with a low resolution PDF of the postcard which could be circulated within your wards and local residents associations.

**3 Question asked by Councillor Tony Shields to Councillor Jayne McCoy, Chair of the Housing, Economy & Business Committee**

The Diamond Riding Centre is one of the most valuable and well-regarded parts of the London Borough of Sutton.

Even having the conversation that may lead to the loss of irreplaceable green belt land on which it relies on for the exercise of Delila, Splash ,Cleo and Frank, to name just a few of the horses that rely on the green belt grazing, so they can carry out their noble work.

Will the lead member join me in demanding the land in question will not be re-designated and further look to see how this land can be further protected from any future planning dangers?

**Reply by Councillor Jayne McCoy**

As part of the work and evidence-gathering for the refresh of the Local Plan, Council officers are required to conduct a borough-wide review of Green Belt land and Metropolitan Open Land (MOL). Any release of Green Belt or MOL land is something which we are required to consult with the Greater London Authority (GLA) and the London Plan. The GLA considered the Council's Green belt and MOL review and concluded that it was a robust assessment.

The Wellfield Gardens site was identified as not meeting the requirements of Green Belt land particularly well, therefore in the Sutton Local Plan consultation, the Wellfield Gardens site has been identified as a potential site reallocation for either open space or residential family housing. However, this will be reviewed once we have analysed the responses to the consultation, including the representation received from the Diamond Riding Centre.

No harm is expected to come to any animals currently using the land as a result of consulting on the designation of this site.

**4 Question asked by Councillor Patrick McManus to Councillor Simon Wales, Lead for Finance**

In the recent independent peer review it was concluded that the Council was in sound financial health and could afford to be more adventurous. This implies that the Council has exaggerated the cuts it needed to make against the backdrop of a healthy balance sheet and healthy reserves by making unnecessary cuts to important services such

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as youth services, children's services and the mobile library as if to portray central government in a bad light.

In what way is the Council going to heed the conclusions and be more adventurous in the future to make up for the unnecessary cuts it has made?

**Reply by Councillor Simon Wales**

Local Government Association figures show that, since 2010 local government has faced reductions in grant funding of 40% and councils have made savings of £20bn in order to balance their budgets. Further cost pressures of nearly £10bn are expected by 2019/20. Sutton's response, based on sound financial forecasting and planning, has been recognised by both the Peer Review and the external auditor's value-for-money conclusion as being prudent and effective, delivering savings of £43m since 2010 with a further £11.4m identified in the 2016/17 budget.

The Council is in sound financial health, precisely because of the actions we have taken in the face of a continuous onslaught of budget reductions by central government. When the peer review talked about the Council being more adventurous it was referring to the future need to work with public sector partners to re-engineer public service delivery in the borough so that we can all manage to deliver the required savings.

**Supplementary Question asked by Councillor Patrick McManus to Councillor Simon Wales, Lead for Finance**

Whilst it is correct that central government has made cuts to local council funding over recent years (in order to mitigate a culture of frivolous spending), this Council continues to be frivolous in terms of lavish communications (PR), giving expensive courses on refrigerating apples, and painfully propping up the Life Centre by cutting children's centres, youth services and the mobile library instead.

Why were cuts not made to the lavish PR budget, Life Centre funding etc. in combination with the use of some of the "robust reserves" funding mentioned in the peer review in order to save one or all of: the youth services, children's services or mobile library?

**Reply by Councillor Simon Wales**

The Council's medium term financial planning process includes a systematic review of every area of Council activity over a number of years and the savings proposals submitted in each year's budget reflect the outcome of that process. The 2015/16 budget, agreed by Council in March 2015 included savings of £50k from recommissioning the communications contract and £50k (£25k in 2015/16 and a further £25k in 2016/17) from efficiencies and income generation at the Life Centre. The 2016/17 budget, agreed by Council in March this year included planned use of

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reserves to support the revenue budget amounting to £5.3m over the period to 2018/19.

**5 Question asked by Councillor Jane Pascoe to Councillor Jill Whitehead, Chair of the Environment and Neighbourhood Committee**

Six months ago, this administration engaged yet another consultant, this time to specifically market the life centre.

Please detail financial measures of the success of this appointment, and if the contract has been extended from the original 6 months.

Please also list separately the numbers of schools at KS3 and KS4 from both in borough and out borough who have attended the PSHE curriculum tours since this appointment.

**Reply by Councillor Jill Whitehead**

The appointment of a company in November 2015 was made to undertake specific pieces of work which are not time based but are linked to specified outputs. Progress on income generation / savings is reported in the monthly budget monitoring report for the Environment, Housing and Regeneration Directorate and also reported to the Life Centre Board.

School visits are seasonal, with most visits being at the end of the academic year. Since last November the number of schools who have visited the Life Centre are:

**KS2:**

- In Borough: 3 schools
- Out of Borough: 16 schools

**KS3**

- In Borough: 3 schools
- Out of Borough: 6

*Note: Life Centre educational tours are configured for Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 and are not currently offered to Key Stage 4 pupils.*

It is important to remember that quite aside from the school tours, the Sutton Life Centre is firstly a local community facility that provides a range of services to local people including the Library, all weather outdoor sports pitch with Sport England Standard changing facilities, conference and training rooms, a youth club and a cafe. A full programme of activity also operates from the Life Centre and large scale community events are run at least twice a year.

The Life Centre continues to operate within its established budget and has met its savings target of £25k for 15/16 and will meet its savings target of £113k for

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2016/17. Visitors to the school tours have increased each year that the Centre has been open, as has revenue generated by the Centre.

**6 Question asked by Councillor Tim Crowley to Councillor Jayne McCoy, Chair of Housing, Economy & Business Committee**

Could the relevant lead councillor explain the administration's definition of fuel poverty and then show how the proposed new energy company set up by Opportunity Sutton Limited will help to eradicate that issue?

**Reply by Councillor Jayne McCoy**

The London Borough of Sutton's 'Fuel Poverty Strategy: 2014/15 and Beyond' considers a household to be 'fuel poor' if its total income is below the poverty line (after taking into account expenditure on fuel costs) and its energy costs are higher than typical.

The purpose of the new energy company (SDEN) is to reduce the reliance on fossil fuels and capture waste heat thereby significantly reducing the amount of carbon emissions into the atmosphere.

Delivery of the SDEN is also expected to generate profits that will be paid to the Council in its capacity as shareholder. Members will then decide how this money is reinvested into council services, which may include initiatives to reduce fuel poverty.

**7 Question asked by Councillor Neil Garratt to Councillor Jill Whitehead, Chair of the Environment and Neighbourhood Committee**

The roadside parking on Woodcote Road in Wallington town centre continues to be a problem and doesn't seem to be working successfully for anyone. The cycle lanes are regularly blocked by overhanging parked cars; the loading bays are often inaccessible for loading/unloading due to parked vehicles; drivers notice other parked cars and are led to assume incorrectly that they're parking spaces, leading to frustration when they're issued a parking ticket; and what was intended to be a de-cluttered, visually open streetscape is chock full of parked vehicles. Is it time to admit defeat and go back to the drawing board?

**Reply by Councillor Jill Whitehead**

The scheme layout for Woodcote Road was designed, in consultation with local residents and business owners, to create an environment that supports local businesses, whilst at the same time reducing congestion and improving the local environment for other road users. As can be the case with any scheme of this nature, there are some operational issues relating to the type and nature of the restrictions in place, given the commercial landscape of the high street can be subject to change and motorist habits emerge.

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Whilst some of the issues can be tackled through robust enforcement, which is undertaken on a daily basis at this location, a review of the scheme layout and the type and nature of the restrictions has been identified given the persistent issues being experienced. Officers are currently undertaking review work and considering options to present back to Members and Wallington Integrated Transport Group.

This review work is currently programmed to be completed in May/June with a view to try and bring about greater compliance and address the issues and meet all stakeholders' requirements.

**8 Question asked by Councillor Nick Mattey to Councillor Jayne McCoy, Chair of the Housing, Economy & Business Committee**

Is it considered a wise use of money to spend £4.5 million on a district heating scheme that will break even in 2038 and save less than 900 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> per year when the incinerator will put 300,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> into the atmosphere each year?

**Reply by Councillor Jayne McCoy**

The investment in a decentralised energy network will be a key step towards achieving the London Borough of Sutton's ambition to become London's most sustainable borough. The Sutton Decentralised Energy Network (SDEN) will enable local businesses and residents to access low carbon energy that would otherwise be wasted, instead of energy generated from burning fossil fuels.

The One Planet Sutton commitment also requires the sustainable management of waste which is in the process of being realised by use of the Energy Recovery Facility to replace landfill. This switch will significantly reduce the levels of greenhouse gases being emitted as part of the waste management process and reduce the carbon footprint of managing waste in each of the South London Waste Partnership boroughs.

These two actions combined will result in a significant reduction in climate damaging emissions in the borough that is not correctly or accurately stated in the question.

The wisdom of investing in such measures depends on a political view of whether action taken to address climate change and prevent environmental damage is worthy of financial investment.

**9 Question asked by Councillor Patrick McManus to Councillor Jayne McCoy, Chair of Housing, Economy & Business Committee**

Why is the Council angering residents by publicising not one but two designated traveller sites within the Local Plan when there is no direct need to do so, especially in a borough which is increasingly running out of space for conventional housing

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(compared to the rest of the country), therefore projecting traveller needs above local needs when we have a severe housing shortage in the area?

**Reply by Councillor Jayne McCoy**

It is not the case that “there is no direct need to designate traveller sites.” Evidence gathered has identified a need for a maximum of 23 pitches over the next 15 years. This is based on the pre-August 2015 Gypsy and Traveller definition because the Council, along with a number of legal commentators, has significant reservations about whether the post-August 2015 Gypsy and Traveller definition meets equality requirements in other legislation. This is why we have identified potential sites that may be suitable for new traveller sites if it is felt that they are needed.

There is no suggestion that these needs are being prioritised over the need for other forms of housing.

The ‘Issues and Preferred Options’ consultation is about defining the future needs of the borough across housing, employment, infrastructure and environmental issues, and that includes making provision for gypsies and travellers who are a distinct group of residents with special requirements as a result of their culture. Some sites may be better suited for gypsies and travellers because of the particular site requirements, keeping in mind that the Issues and Preferred Options document is clear about the choices around the amount of housing growth and where it should be located.

We believe that it is important that residents are aware of the issues in relation to planning for Gypsy & Traveller needs and given the opportunity to comment through the Local Plan consultation.

**Supplementary Question asked by Councillor Patrick McManus to Councillor Jayne McCoy, Chair of Housing, Economy & Business Committee**

In the August 2015 definition it states that "local planning authorities should make their own assessment of need for the purposes of planning". Why has it been deemed plausible that any pitches at all, let alone 2 pitches of the national shortage of 23 pitches could potentially be needed in the London Borough of Sutton when there is such a serious shortage of land here already?

**Reply by Councillor Jayne McCoy**

The Council has undertaken its own assessment and a local need of 23 pitches has been identified for the period 2015-30. The need has been calculated from Gypsies and Travellers on the Housing list, current overcrowding and estimated household formation. A paper explaining the calculation is available on the Council’s website.

There are no figures for the national shortage. The GLA undertook a London-wide study in 2008 which identified a pitch shortage of between 226 and 703 pitches across London for the period 2007-17.

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**10 Question asked by Councillor Jane Pascoe to Councillor Jill Whitehead,  
Chair of the Environment and Neighbourhood Committee**

How many of the boroughs parks are used for park runs?

Please list them.

**Reply by Councillor Jill Whitehead**

I can confirm that Roundshaw Playing Field is the only park in Sutton used for Park run.

**11 Question asked by Councillor Neil Garratt to Councillor Jill Whitehead, Chair  
of the Environment and Neighbourhood Committee**

Last month when asked about Sutton children being able to cycle safely to school, Tom Brake answered "It is important that we improve road safety and encourage more children to embrace healthy lifestyles, but only segregated cycle ways will really make the difference." Does the administration agree with Tom? And if so, after 30 years of Lib Dem control in Sutton, where are all the segregated cycle ways to allow children to cycle safely to school?

**Reply by Councillor Jill Whitehead**

The Council has an adopted Cycling Strategy and agrees with Tom Brake MP that segregated cycle ways will encourage school children, nervous cyclists and new cyclists to start cycling.

As the road layout and demands of all road users are considered when designing a safe cycleway, the Council has used a variety of cycling infrastructure measures over the last 30 years. There is infrastructure such as allowing cycling on the footway or on footpaths as this segregates the cyclists from the traffic. This type of measure can be found in the vicinity of Overton Grange School, Rushy Meadow Primary School, Greenshaw High School and others. There are contraflow cycle lanes to allow cyclists to cycle two way in a one way street to give cyclists good access to areas that have restrictions for vehicles. This type of measure can be found in the vicinity of Sutton Grammar School and Foresters Primary School.

Over the last 30 years the expectation of the type of cycle facility to be provided has increased. The Council will continue to review the types of design available and will continue to provide the best facilities taking into consideration the needs of all types of users.

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**12 Question asked by Councillor Nick Matthey to Councillor Jayne McCoy, Chair of the Housing, Economy & Business Committee**

How many properties owned by Sutton Housing Partnership (SHP) have meters installed so that residents can measure the cost of heating and hot water and what is the average cost per kWh for heating over SHP properties?

**Reply by Councillor Jayne McCoy**

Most Sutton Housing Partnership (SHP) properties will have meters supplied by utility companies so that they are able to measure usage for billing purposes. Residents will have sight of these bills which detail their usage. The exception will be those properties which benefit from a district heating and hot water supply where we do not currently provide meters to enable the tracking of individual consumption. It should be borne in mind the number of such properties has significantly reduced in recent years.

If Councillor Matthey is referring to smart meters which enable residents to see which appliances in their homes use most energy then there are currently no smart meters installed in SHP-managed properties other than ones which may have been obtained from the energy companies by residents directly.

The cost per K/wH for heating varies by fuels source - for example 4.2p/KwH for gas or 14p/KwH for electricity (see <http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/corporate/our-calculations>). For context, the average fuel bill for SHP stock has been calculated to be £572 per annum by the GLA RENEW team.

**13 Question asked by Councillor Patrick McManus to Councillor Jayne McCoy, Chair of Housing, Economy & Business Committee**

How did the Council manage to designate traveller sites so quickly as part of the Local Plan when it did not manage to designate potential school sites anywhere near as quickly?

**Reply by Councillor Jayne McCoy**

There is a great deal of evidence required to be gathered as part of the process of reviewing the Local Plan. There has been work undertaken on investigating potential sites for both schools and travellers since 2012. It is therefore not correct to say that the traveller sites were designated any more quickly than any other site designation.

**14 Question asked by Councillor Jane Pascoe to Councillor Jill Whitehead, Chair of the Environment and Neighbourhood Committee**

How much did the total exercise of drawing chalk circles round bits of chewing gum in Sutton High Street cost?

Please also include staff time and equipment costs.

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**Reply by Councillor Jill Whitehead**

The total cost of conducting the chewing gum chalking exercise over four consecutive Saturday mornings was £1,342. This formed part of our anti-litter campaign, Clean Streets Sutton, which uses a behaviour change approach to prevent litter and chewing gum being dropped on our streets.

An investment of just over £1,000 generated local and wider interest with articles in local and national press. 276 residents stopped to talk to the team about chewing gum and litter. 170 Gumdrop keyrings were given out to residents to help them to dispose of gum responsibly.

Preventing chewing gum from being dropped on our streets means the less we need to spend on cleaning up our streets. According to the Local Government Association, it costs 3p to buy a piece of chewing gum and around £1.50 to remove it from the street.

The Clean Streets Sutton campaign is funded from our successful bid to the Department of Communities and Local Government.

**15 Question asked by Councillor Neil Garratt to Councillor Simon Wales, Lead for Finance**

When people learn that The Lodge was sold off at below market value in a private deal to a group which appears closely linked to the political administration, without the sale being advertised, and without any other groups being invited to propose possible future use for this building, the typical reaction is shock at what they see as a corrupt back-room deal. What would the administration say to those people?

**Reply by Councillor Simon Wales**

It is a strange sort of backroom deal that agrees the preferred use of a building through a public meeting attended by well over 60 residents and all Ward Councillors from both political parties present, followed by reports over 3 years to three separate meetings of the Strategy & Resources Committee that were all held in public without any of the documents made confidential. I therefore welcome this question as it gives me an opportunity to set the facts straight.

A special Carshalton & Clockhouse local committee was held on the 15 September 2011 solely to discuss the Council's plans for the heritage buildings in Carshalton. At the meeting, which had over 60 residents present, the unanimous decision was that the vision for the future use of the Lodge, which was presented by Ecolocal, was the preferred use for the building. This vision was developed into the proposals agreed by Strategy & Resources Committee on the 28 September 2015. Similarly, the Sutton Centre for Voluntary Sector's (SCVS) proposals for the future use of the Grove presented at the same local committee meeting in 2011 were also supported and form the basis of the Heritage Lottery Fund bid submitted by SCVS for refurbishing the Grove. Officers were consequently requested to work up these proposals and have

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brought back further reports for consideration and decision by the Strategy & Resources Committee on the 23 September 2013, 13 October 2014 and 28 September 2015.

It is important to set out the recommendations agreed at the Strategy & Resources Committee meeting of the 23 September 2013. These were **unanimously** agreed and I would point out that this included all the opposition members on the committee. The recommendations were:

- 1. That Ecolocal is notified of the Council's intention to transfer the use the Lodge for their use, subject to agreement of terms and viable proposals and business plan being developed by Ecolocal and approved by the Council.*
- 2. That Ecolocal are given up till September 2014 to finalise their proposals for agreement by the Council.*

At the Strategy & Resources Committee of the 13 October 2014, it was also **unanimously** agreed that:

- 1. Ecolocal should progress to the next stage of developing their proposals for the Lodge so that it is ready for planning submission; complete the preparation of their business plan and agree terms with the Council for the transfer of the building and its future use by March 2015.*
- 2. Ecolocal consults local residents and Friends Groups on their proposals by March 2015 so that the outcome of the consultation can be reported to Strategy & Resources.*

The report of the 13 October 2014 also noted that one of Ecolocal's requirements was for the Lodge be transferred at less than the open market value with the difference bridged by the social value of their proposed scheme. Both the legal and financial comments in the report extensively reviewed the implications of sale at an undervalue and the powers the Council has to make such a decision.

Consequently, the report considered at the 28 September 2015 meeting of the Strategy & Resources Committee was focused on whether the business plan prepared by Ecolocal was viable and whether it provides best value to the Council. Officers were very clear in their recommendation that the combination of £600k in cash for the lease plus social value assessed at over £1.3m per year more than compensates for not selling the Lodge for the highest value obtainable.

It is instructive to set out why the building could not be sold for the highest value possible. As agreed by Members, the preferred option of residents was for a mixed residential and community use scheme. The highest value can only be obtained if the Lodge were to be developed solely as residential units. It is however, a requirement that should any Council sell any land at an undervalue, it should also state what the open market value would be and state the reasons why it is proceeding at an undervalue.

It is therefore disingenuous to put the question the way that Councillor Garratt has chosen to phrase it. Having jointly agreed with a particular direction of travel for the

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Lodge, the noise being made now by the Opposition can only be seen for what it is - an opportunistic and cynical attempt to discredit the administration. If Councillor Garratt is telling residents that the Lodge 'has been sold off', he is guilty of misleading them at best, and should publish a retraction. The Lodge remains in the ownership of the Council, which was another concern addressed by residents at meetings attended by members of both parties.

The answer to any resident is obvious from the narrative I have just given. There were no back room deals, all decisions have been taken properly and openly. The proposals not only represent best value for the Council, they are also a well-balanced response to the outcome of consultation with residents.

**16 Question asked by Councillor Nick Matthey to Councillor Jayne McCoy, Chair of the Housing, Economy & Business Committee**

Where meters are not fitted to measure heating cost and Sutton Housing Partnership residents are charged a fixed rate each week, what would be the estimated saving in CO2 emissions per dwelling if residents paid according to usage?

**Reply by Councillor Jayne McCoy**

All heating costs for SHP managed district heating and hot water systems are charged to residents on the basis of overall consumption and their property size.

It is not possible to identify the potential impact on CO2 emissions of meter installation as it would be pure speculation based on estimates of current individual usage and behaviour change theory.

**17 Question asked by Councillor Patrick McManus to Councillor Jayne McCoy, Chair of Housing, Economy & Business Committee**

What has been the Council's level of engagement with the traveller community, especially in terms of how the designated traveller sites would be run insofar as who the potential landlords of the designated traveller sites would be and how they might organise the plots within the confines of the sites?

**Reply by Councillor Jayne McCoy**

The issue of designating a site for Gypsies and Travellers as part of a review of the Local Plan should not be confused with the actual provision of facilities and management of a site, which would require specific and separate consultation.

At the end of December 2015, officers sent a letter to Gypsies and Travellers on the council site, stating that officers would be visiting on 12 January to discuss a variety of issues, which included new Gypsy and Traveller site proposals.

Officers duly visited the site with a map suggesting broad locations of potential Gypsy and Traveller sites. Officers were unable to give precise locations because the

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Housing, Economy & Business Committee had yet to approve the Local Plan Issues and Preferred Options document. A number of Gypsies and Travellers commented on the need and location for new Gypsy and Traveller sites. These comments were published in the Local Plan Issues and Preferred Options Evidence Base Library (document 8G).

**18 Question asked by Councillor Jane Pascoe to Councillor Jill Whitehead, Chair of the Environment and Neighbourhood Committee**

What was the recruitment process for engaging volunteers to take part in the great chewing gum identification exercise? How many took part?

**Reply by Councillor Jill Whitehead**

In total 19 volunteers took part in the exercise in Sutton High Street. Volunteers were recruited through:

- Press release on the chalking activity;
- Sutton Volunteer Centre;
- Insight;
- Weekly Members Information Briefing;
- Social media; and
- Inviting people in the High Street on the day.

**19 Question asked by Councillor Nick Matthey to Councillor Jill Whitehead, Chair of the Environment and Neighbourhood Committee**

The Viridor Incinerator in Splott has had a metal recovery unit fitted to stop metal being heated up unnecessarily in the incinerator. Will a similar unit be fitted in Beddington?

**Reply by Councillor Jill Whitehead**

We can confirm the Beddington Energy Recovery Facility (ERF) will be fitted with the same system to extract metals as that used at Viridor's ERF in Splott.

**20 Question asked by Councillor Patrick McManus to Councillor Richard Clifton, Chair of Planning Committee**

Why does the Council allow presentations to be given by property developers to voting councillors prior to Planning Committee meetings when objectors to the plans are not then given the same opportunity or at least invited to the presentations?

**Reply by Councillor Richard Clifton**

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It is important with the complexity of planning issues on major applications that Members are as well-informed as possible prior to making a decision. The purpose of a meeting with an applicant and/or their architects is to have the scheme explained in detail and for Councillors to be able to ask any questions they may have on the technical details of the proposals. There is no debate about the planning merits of the proposals. This is not an opportunity for the lobbying of individual Councillors, or the Committee as a whole, on a particular scheme. Good decision-taking is more likely when Councillors have complete information, and applications that are not well based are more likely to be refused if Councillors have full information about them.

Developers are advised to undertake their own public consultation, which may include exhibitions and public meetings, and there is no involvement of officers or Councillors in such consultation. Consultation is a requirement on major proposals and a document - a 'Statement of Community Involvement' - has to be submitted as part of the application setting out the steps that have been taken to ensure the public are aware of the proposals and have had sight of the plans.

The only forum where there is a debate is the Planning Committee where objectors and supporters are able to express their views directly to the Committee and an opportunity is given for members to ask them questions.

**21 Question asked by Councillor Nick Matthey to Councillor Jill Whitehead, Chair of the Environment and Neighbourhood Committee**

Residents near the Viridor incinerator in Splott have been complaining of an unpleasant burnt plastic smell since the incinerator has begun operation. What guarantees are there that residents near the Beddington incinerator will not experience the same degradation in air quality?

**Reply by Councillor Jill Whitehead**

Officers have no knowledge of resident complaints in Splott. However, the Environmental Risk Assessment report, submitted by Viridor as part of the planning application, provides details on the measures that will be taken to prevent odours from the Energy Recovery Facility (ERF). Gases produced during the energy recovery process will be captured, cooled and go through a cleaning process where they are neutralised and pollutants removed. Emissions in the chimney are monitored and recorded. The results are made available to the Environment Agency. The Environment Agency will ensure that Viridor operates the ERF in line with the stringent conditions of the environmental permit which is based on the relevant EU directives on air quality.

**22 Question asked by Councillor Patrick McManus to Councillor Jill Whitehead, Chair of the Environment and Neighbourhood Committee**

What can the Council do to both improve and measure air quality more comprehensively right across the Borough?

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**Reply by Councillor Jill Whitehead**

The Council currently operates 5 automatic monitoring stations across the borough which, between them, measure nitrogen dioxide, PM10, PM2.5 and ozone. In addition, we have a more extensive network of indicative monitors that measure nitrogen dioxide. Air quality monitoring data is made publicly available at [www.Londonair.org.uk](http://www.Londonair.org.uk) and at [www.LoveCleanAir.org](http://www.LoveCleanAir.org).

The Council declared the whole borough an Air Quality Management Area in 2013 and an Action Plan for improving air quality was put in place. Progress on delivering the measures in the Action Plan are reported annually to both DEFRA and the GLA. As part of the review of the system of Local Air Quality Management for London, a new Air Quality Action Plan is being developed to ensure that it is up-to-date and that it aligns more closely with actions being taken across the whole of London.

As the biggest contributor to levels of air pollution across the borough are emissions from transport, many of the measures are aimed at promoting the use of sustainable transport and deterring the use of motor vehicles, particularly for short, single-occupancy journeys. Recently Sutton and Croydon council submitted a joint bid as part of London's bid to the Office of Low Emission Vehicles. This funding would allow Sutton and Croydon to encourage an increase in the uptake of low emission vehicles through the trialling of a consolidation centre serviced by electric vehicles, and potentially a virtual parking scheme for electric delivery vehicles. London Councils are currently deciding which of the London bids will receive funding.

**23 Question asked by Councillor Nick Matthey to Councillor Jill Whitehead, Chair of the Environment and Neighbourhood Committee**

According to a plume plotter forecast the Viridor Incinerator under certain atmospheric conditions increases background emissions of oxides of Nitrogen by 9 micrograms per cubic metre in the surrounding area. Will schools be alerted under these conditions?

**Reply by Councillor Jill Whitehead**

Emissions from the stack will be monitored and the process will be regulated by the Environment Agency. Sutton Council also operate a network of five air quality monitors, as part of our Air Quality Action Plan including two in Beddington Lane. These measure concentrations of nitrogen dioxide in the ambient air. Current and historic data is made publicly available on the London Air website. This is an example where questions could be composited or one answer given for both questions.

As part of the assessment of the proposed development, ground level concentrations of pollutants resulting from emissions from the stack were modelled. Inputs were used to model different conditions so that worst-case scenarios could be identified. Of all the oxides of nitrogen (NO<sub>x</sub>), it is nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) which may affect health and

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the increases in annual average concentrations of nitrogen dioxide are not predicted to increase by more than 0.5µg/m<sup>3</sup> at any location.

London Borough of Sutton works with King's College who carry out pollution forecasts and these are available at:

<http://www.londonair.org.uk/london/asp/nowcast.asp>

Where air pollution levels are predicted to be elevated, we aim to alert people who may be affected using social media. In addition, people are encouraged to sign up to AirText so that they can receive a pollution alert by text, e-mail or voicemail. This service is available to all but a school could nominate a representative to receive the alert and circulate the information internally.

**24 Question asked by Councillor Patrick McManus to Councillor Colin Stears, Chair of Adult Social Services and Health Committee**

Since as a council we became dementia friends in 2014, what was the increase in the Council's spending and activity on dementia care in the Borough in 2015 over 2014 and which new areas of dementia care have been addressed since 2014?

**Reply by Councillor Colin Stears**

Since the Council became Dementia Friends in 2014, working with our partners we have continued to review the support that is offered to those with Dementia and those supporting family members. As a council we continue to invest in these services and look for opportunities to jointly deliver and fund such services with our key partners.

Services that have started or been recommissioned to provide additional support include:

**Dementia Friends** - the council has implemented Dementia Champions who deliver training to staff across the borough. This worked is offered in partnership with Alzheimer's Society.

**Admiral Nurses** - the council has implemented the previously agreed Admiral Nurse team supporting residents with Dementia. The team consists of 4 staff with an investment of circa £200,000 per annum, which is funded via the Better Care Fund.

**Dymond House** - Opened early 2015 and consists of 30 flats in a Housing with Care scheme for people with dementia. The Council directly invests £200,000 per annum in this service. In addition, some residents also receive Personal Budgets to meet their individual support needs.

**Carers Service** - the Council, in partnership with Sutton Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), have jointly re-procured the Carers Support Service, which now includes Dementia awareness training for carers and support for carers of people with Dementia. The investment is £200,000 pa.

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**Care Act Advocacy** - this service provides advocates to help those with Dementia to be involved in the care and support processes, ensuring their voice is heard. Total investment is £70,000 pa.

Council officers continue to work with our partners to increase the awareness of Dementia and look for ways to increase the support offer to these residents. Working with the CCG we are redesign the pathways for dementia care.

Through our recommissioning work we are reviewing the way in which we provide service to this client group, ensuring they and their families receive appropriate support when needed.

**25 Question asked by Councillor Patrick McManus to Councillor Jill Whitehead, Chair of the Environment and Neighbourhood Committee**

Why have so many public committee meetings been cancelled in the run up to the forthcoming elections? The specific example I'd like you to answer relates to the Environment and Neighbourhood Committee last week. It's not as if Sutton Council has a sound enough record on the Environment to be able to justifiably cancel any single Environment and Neighbourhood committee meeting, especially since it stunningly lowered the environmental targets it sets for its very self quite recently.

**Reply by Councillor Jill Whitehead**

Having consulted the Forward Plan of forthcoming decisions, the Chair of the Environment and Neighbourhoods Committee, in conjunction with the Strategic Director of Environment, Housing and Regeneration agreed there were no items needing a Member decision proposed for this committee. It was therefore decided to cancel the Environment and Neighbourhoods Committee.

Following this year's review of the Constitution and the Scheme of Delegation, a committee need only make a decision if it falls into one of the following categories:

- Contract award of over £1m in total;
- Contract variations of a value greater than £500,000 or 25% or more of the contract value;
- Capital virements over £250,000;
- Revenue estimate virements over £500,000;
- New capital schemes over £500,000;
- Write off debts exceeding £100,000 following a recommendation;
- Approval of grants in excess of £50,000;
- Decisions affected wards larger than a local committee area;
- Decisions within the budget and policy framework;
- Any decision to reduce, cease or spin out a service;
- Any policy decision which has resulted from an overview and scrutiny or task and finish panel review and the response to that review and its recommendations; and
- Recommendations to Full Council in relation to the policy and budget.

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If there are no such decisions to be made, it is not considered a good use of Council resources and Member and Officer time to proceed with the meeting.

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