

Gifford House  
67c St Helier Avenue  
Morden SM4 6HY  
DX 161030 Morden 3

Direct Line: 020 8545 3338  
Fax: 020 8545 3244  
My Ref: L/JC/1232/745  
Your Ref:

Date: 22nd March 2018

Dear Stephen and Oonagh

**Re: Request to halt building works at Merton Hall**

Thank you for your letter and your request that the Council put on hold building works at Merton Hall because of the start of the pre election “purdah” period. I have given careful consideration to the points raised.

I am very mindful of the pre election restrictions on Council activity in relation to publicity and the need to avoid controversial decisions which bind the Council prior to the election outcome. The Council has in place strict arrangements to ensure compliance and there are no meetings or significant decisions other than normal council business timetabled until after 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2018.

The building works at Merton Hall are further to a building contract that was procured and agreed by the Cabinet in December 2017 and subject to scrutiny at a meeting of the Council’s call in panel on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2018. Following that decision the Council entered into a contract for the works to be carried out to Merton Hall during 2018. The current works are further to that contract.

Given that the decision was made some months ago and the contractual commitment has been properly entered into by the Council, I do not think the pre election restrictions on publicity or sensitive decision making apply in this case. It is rather the continuation of a course of action which has already been committed to by the Council and has been subject to the formal checks and balances.

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Paul Evans

Assistant Director of Corporate Governance London Borough of Merton

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In the circumstances I do not feel there are grounds which would justify me taking action further to the pre election rules to advise the council it should suspend the works pending the outcome of the election.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can assist further at this stage.

Kind regards

Paul Evans  
Assistant Director Corporate Governance

E-mail: [paul.evans@merton.gov.uk](mailto:paul.evans@merton.gov.uk)

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