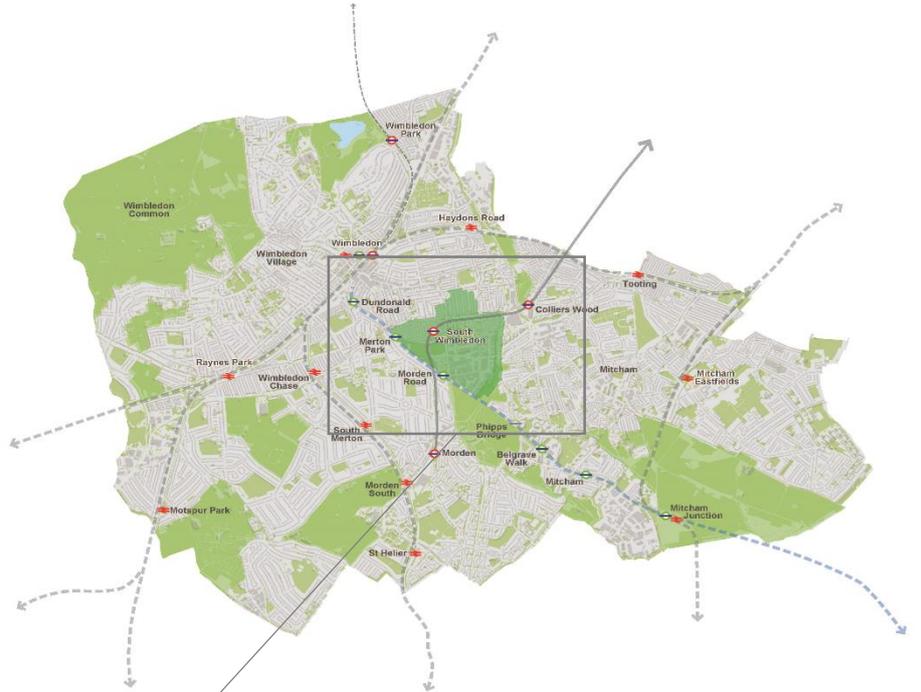


Policy N3.5

South Wimbledon



South Wimbledon neighbourhood



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Policy N3.5

South Wimbledon

Recognising South Wimbledon as a distinctive neighbourhood in its own right

We will do this by:

- a. Proposing a new Local Centre at the heart of the South Wimbledon, focussed around the underground station and junction;
- b. Supporting shops, services and businesses commensurate with a local centre, particularly those that serve the day-to-day needs of local residents;
- c. Supporting developments that help improve or strengthen the character of the main roads;
- d. Support developments that creates a well-designed shopfront in accordance with Merton's shopfront guidance and encouraging landowners and businesses fronting Merton High Street, Kingston Road, Morden Road and Merton Hall Road to improve their shopfronts and building facades;
- e. Supporting measures to enhance the streetscene public realm in South Wimbledon, particularly along the main roads where most travel takes place;
- f. Encouraging measures that help to minimise and mitigate pollutants associated with the busy road network, including planting and green cover, measures to encourage walking and cycling and, electric vehicle charging points;
- g. Support development commensurate with the excellent public transport access of the area that improves or enhances local character, and combines strong historical attributes in a modern way;
- h. Support improvements to the transport infrastructure that will help to reduce road congestion and improve the public realm, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists;

- i. Work with the regeneration phases being delivered on the High Path estate over the next 10-15 years, guided by the Estates Local Plan; this includes the proposed public park at High Path;
- j. Supporting the redevelopment at South Wimbledon station which respects and enhances the listed building and encouraging a public space and secondary pedestrian entrance to the underground station off the busy main roads.

Justification

- 3.5.1. South Wimbledon lies at the centre of Merton; in previous Local Plans the area has been subsumed into Colliers Wood or Wimbledon. However, there are now a number of factors that support South Wimbledon being considered a defined Local Centre in its own right and the council proposes to take this forward through this new Local Plan. These factors are set out below.
- 3.5.2. It is clear from the responses to the stage 1 consultation and the work started by the community-led South Wimbledon Enhancement plan that local residents consider South Wimbledon as a neighbourhood with its own distinctive character.
- 3.5.3. The area has a very strong historical context. Although there are limited remnants that are easily visible above ground, there are many distinctive historical references to be found in structures, buildings and local gardens in the area. Admiral Lord Nelson's "Paradise Merton" estate was located where High Path now stands and St John the Devine Church and Nelson Gardens were both created to commemorate the anniversary of Nelson's death. South Wimbledon station building and Rodney Place cottages are both heritage assets directly connected to the advent of London Underground. The surrounding residential areas have distinctive characters and built form in themselves (e.g. the "Battles" roads of Victorian / Edwardian terraces, the "Australias" to the west, the High Path estate itself) and these design standards are occasionally reflected on Merton High Street and Kingston Road. These residential neighbourhoods are, in appearance, distinct islands of development except where they meet the main road frontage. The council therefore supports residents in trying to create a more cohesive, integrated South Wimbledon local centre, based around the South Wimbledon junction.

- 3.5.4. Like other Local Centres, the function of South Wimbledon is to provide local shops and services for people that live nearby so that households can access these by walking or cycling, reducing the need to travel far or to travel by vehicle. We recognise that the way we shop is changing, and rapidly. The increase in online shopping, the recent rise of food delivery apps and changes to national rules to allow small shops throughout England to convert to flats without planning permission is changing the economic viability and occupation of shopfronts.
- 3.5.5. Across London there has been a contraction the numbers of shops along main road arteries, slightly offset by a rise in cafes and restaurants around transport hubs which can serve both passing customers and the wider area via online food delivery apps. Kingston Road in particular has seen several small shops convert to flats outside the planning system; there are some good examples and some extremely poor examples of the resultant shopfronts.
- 3.5.6. In considering the opportunities for South Wimbledon as a local centre, the council considered several options for the extent of the local centre boundary. The draft Local Centre boundary focusses on South Wimbledon junction encompassing shopping parades in all directions where shops and services are most likely to be viable due to the higher footfall. However, there may be other options for the boundary and we would welcome comments on this.



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- 3.5.7. There are a wide variety of different businesses fronting the main roads around South Wimbledon. Many are small supermarkets or food shops, cafes, restaurants and hot food takeaways. The council will continue to support businesses commensurate with the Local Centre. The council recognises the larger number of hot food takeaways in South Wimbledon and the links to childhood obesity, in accordance with other policies in the plan, will not support further takeaways where there is already an over-concentration.
- 3.5.8. People are more likely to use local shops and services if they are in an attractive setting, if the walking or cycling route to reach them looks good and feels safe. While many of the surrounding local streets are attractive with properties that are generally well cared for and maintained by their occupants, the busy arterial roads are noisy, heavily trafficked and don't have the same sense of place as exists in the surrounding neighbourhoods. To help create a better sense of place around South Wimbledon junction, the council will support development and public realm improvements that soften the look and feel of the Local Centre, reference the historic and local character of the surrounding areas, provide development standards (e.g. building orientation, insulation, winter gardens etc.) that helps mitigate the road issues). The council will also encourage businesses and residents to restore or redevelop building facades to a high standard. Merton's shopfront design guide provides practical information about how to assess, design, and maintain a successful shopfront and can be used regardless of the occupier of the building.
- 3.5.9. Consultation responses to the Local Plan at stage 1 and prior to the Local Plan have called for more public space to be created around South Wimbledon. Nelson Gardens along Morden Road is perhaps too far away from the station and the areas of highest footfall to be well used. Proposals for the High Path estate, as guided by the Estates Local Plan and set out in the approved Outline Planning Application, will provide a new public park as well as smaller pockets of landscaped space within the estate. However aside from the regeneration of High Path there are no large sites in the immediate South Wimbledon area adjoining the main roads and so there is more limited opportunity for the creation of new public space with close proximity to where most people use the Underground Station, shops and services and would benefit the most.

- 3.5.10. The council therefore supports the creation of small pockets of well-designed public space close to South Wimbledon underground station where they are most likely to provide opportunities for pause away from the busy main roads
- 3.5.11. The regeneration of the High Path estate will take place in phases over the next 15 years. This investment will result in the most substantial change to the layout, function and character of High Path. While the Estates Local Plan 2018 provides the planning framework to guide this regeneration, it will also deliver key proposals that South Wimbledon respondents have called for, including a public park fronting Merton High Street, a new layout fronting Merton High Street with new shopfronts and business space; investment in landscaping and the public realm. New development proposals must have regard to the proposed regeneration at High Path as well as this plan, to ensure that South Wimbledon is developed as a cohesive, attractive and legible neighbourhood. Before designing new schemes, potential applicants for schemes within the vicinity of the High Path estate are advised to refer to the High Path section of Merton's adopted Estates Local Plan 2018 and to contact the applicants of the outline planning application 17/P1721 (Clarion Housing Group) to ensure co-ordination of site designs, uses, materials and movement.
- 3.5.12. South Wimbledon Business Area (also known as Morden Industrial Area) to the south forms part of Merton's Strategic Industrial Locations and is one of Merton's most popular and best occupied estates for businesses throughout south London. Developments will be supported that retain or improve the area for employment purposes, especially those catering for modern business accommodation. Development that could locate in town centres such as retail or offices that are not ancillary to other development will be resisted, in order to minimise potential conflict with the HGVs and extended business operational hours required in a modern economy.