

Bailey A & T

Dear Merton Council Consultation team,

I would like to comment on the Merton Local Plan, deadline today. I have the following points I would like to make:

1. Building Height - I am very concerned about the proposals around building heights around Wimbledon. The Local Plan refers to a need for more mid rise buildings in Wimbledon town centre, including along the Broadway (YMCA and surrounding buildings) parallel to our own house. The numbers of storeys that would be permitted under the definition of mid rise is extraordinary. The YMCA currently stands at 8 storeys and already towers above the surrounding area. I strongly object to proposals that could see this stretch of the Broadway (and other parts of Wimbledon) with high rise buildings of 15 storeys or more. Rather I would encourage the Council to consider a cap on level of storeys which reflects the existing footprint and height of the existing building, perhaps a certain percentage increase over existing levels capped at a maximum of single digits (9) in any case given the importance of maintaining a balanced and proportionate city scape across Wimbledon. These kinds of percentage increases are common in residential development proposals and would seem well suited to getting a balanced commercial development.

2. Traffic / Parking - I am concerned about the impact that this level of building will have on traffic flow both during and after development. It is notable in the area surrounding the Broadway and Wimbledon town centre that what appear to be small construction works can have a huge and detrimental effect on local traffic flows. Recent examples include the closing of parts of the Broadway due to large vehicle working on the new Holiday Inn for a couple of hours and the recurring problems with the Haydon Park Road bridge which caused huge pile up and traffic problems along Trinity Road. I have serious concerns about how major building work along large stretches of the Broadway would affect traffic throughout Wimbledon and in residential roads, including South Park Road. Our stretch of the road is often used as a cut through to avoid traffic lights as cars race down the road and then turn at Bridges Road. Huge blockages on The Broadway would only intensify this. I see no substantial analysis of traffic on any of the plans and measures and methods the Council would take to mitigate or prevent these.

3. Pollution - Merton Council will not be unaware of the extremely high and dangerous levels of pollution along Putney High Street, far in excess of safe limits. Analysis has shown that these high levels have been aided by high rise buildings along Putney High Street which have created a funnel along which the pollution cannot escape. Putney High Street is extremely unpleasant because of high traffic volumes, high pollution and high levels of noise. The Local Plan, in encouraging significant high rise building along the main shopping street of Wimbledon risks turning consumers away from Wimbledon rather than attracting them to the Broadway, not least because of the impact on pollution levels. I have seen no

analysis in the Local Plan of pollution levels both during and after build work. I am assuming this is because such analysis would show that there would be a significantly detrimental impact, including in the immediate surrounding area, including my own road, South Parks Road. Instead of looking at Putney and Croyden as examples of effective high street town planning, the Local Plan should reference instead central Kingston with its pedestrianised streets, its central market, its victorian and georgian shop frontages and low rise buildings throughout.

4. Parking - I have significant concerns that the Local Plan has not considered the impact of parking on these new developments. It is not enough, for example, for the YMCA proposal to say that "mitigating and managing the impacts of parking on neighbourhood will need to be addressed". How will it be addressed? It is already impossible for us to find parking on our road on a Sunday as parking is free that day. With the new increased parking charges, our section will become even more overcrowded as people from outside Wimbledon seek to avoid parking charges. If significant new business and other developments are considered along our stretch of the Broadway, we need a guarantee that sufficient parking will either be provided on-site or parking permits won't be handed out. Most Sundays we are unable to park on our road, let alone within a decent walking distance of our house and have to park on a neighbouring road instead. We have purposefully followed guidance on "greening London" to remove paving from our front garden and plant instead. If parking becomes more untenable across Wimbledon, there will be more and more homeowners forced to turn their front gardens into parking, surely something the Council would want to avoid.

5. Demand - Finally I have not seen any justification as to why the Council believes there will be demand for thousands of new jobs and increases in commercial space in Wimbledon. Christmas trading figures show quite clearly that the demand for retail shopping environments will continue to decrease in future years for example. But most importantly given the significant economic uncertainty at this point in time, and the lack of certainty on crossrail, it seems irresponsible for the Council to be considering such a radical development at this point in time. I would urge the Council to put on hold its proposals on the Local plan at the very least until crossrail 2 certainty is provided and certainly until there is more clarity around Brexit. It is quite clear that the Local plan is particularly tied to crossrail 2 proposals and to indicate that it is not is disengenious. Wimbledon does not have the existing transport infrastructure to accommodate the claimed 8,000 new job arrivals without crossrail 2. Planning a development of this scale without certainty on whether the transport infrastructure will be available, or indeed whether the wider economic environment will support it, is not sensible.

In conclusion, I would urge you to reconsider your proposals for the Local plan in and around central Wimbledon. In particular, the building height proposals are far in excess of what is appropriate for Wimbledon, will detract people from wanting to live, work and shop in Wimbledon and is far from sensible in these uncertain economic times. Should the Council still decide to press ahead with a version of these proposals, far more detailed thought and analysis is needed on traffic, pollution and parking to name but a few. Thank you