

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing officially on behalf of the Battles Area Residents Association (BARA) following your request for views about the proposed Merton Local Plan 2020, for which the deadline for representations is January 8.

BARA represents the interests of around 120 households on the Battles estate, Wycliffe, Ridley and Latimer Roads and neighbouring main roads including Merton Road, Merton High Street and Haydons Road. Consequently, the area we cover is roughly one third to one quarter of what is generally regarded as South Wimbledon.

I am writing a bespoke email as I object to the format you have provided for people to give feedback. It is too restrictive and does not allow our organisation to address the concerns we have.

Our primary concern is that the suggestions you propose do not allow South Wimbledon to be treated as a specific, designated area, which has planning needs of its own. It is not sufficient to consider it part of Colliers Wood. The way your draft plan seems to be written, South Wimbledon is effectively subservient to Colliers Wood.

As members of your team will have gauged at repeated Wimbledon Community Forum meetings, many people in South Wimbledon feel that the existing development plans, such as the Town Centre Masterplan, Core Planning Strategy and Sites and Policies do not do enough to address the needs of South Wimbledon residents.

The reason for this is many-fold.

1. South Wimbledon (SW) has for many years been as overlooked as Colliers Wood (CW) in terms of development assistance. But while the focus now is on Colliers Wood, it is not enough to expect there to be a beneficial spread from the improvements enjoyed by CW to SW. It needs its own targeted help to improve.
2. SW is a transport hub of much greater importance than CW. While this offers opportunities for the area which need to be specifically addressed by a Local Plan, it also poses challenges that also need to be specifically addressed.
3. There is a danger that SW will continue to be ignored because it sits between two areas of focus under the proposed Local Plan - CW and Wimbledon.
4. Indeed, the focus of attention on CW and Wimbledon could result in SW suffering, with resources, income, expenditure and attention being redirected away from an area where businesses are already struggling, shops are closing down and being converted to flats.
5. Finally, with the largest component of the Estates Plan being within SW and not CW - High Path - the lack of a specific plan for SW will lead to a failure to plan for its much

changed needs, once High Path is fully developed. The Estates Plan does not make specific provisions for the surrounding areas, even though High Path will dramatically impact on them.

The addition of some 1,000 homes to the area as well as approximately 9,000m<sup>2</sup> of commercial space under the High Path plan, will put considerable pressure on the area, so to fail to provide a specific plan for the SW area as a whole is likely to result in significant uncontrolled change and probable damage to the area.

We believe the local plan should do as it suggests it will in the accompanying video and make allowances for all of the following headings for SW: Waste, Social Provision, Sustainability and Natural Environment, Open Space, People, Housing, Transport, Town (or local) Centres and Built Environment.

In your surveys, there was no provision to request any of these aspects are built into the plan for South Wimbledon.

Instead, the plan should set out the following:

- It should have clear objectives to provide schools and health facilities to provide for the increased population and provide community facilities for the young, old, disabled and those without or unable to work in SW.
- It should ensure open space in SW is protected, the natural environment in SW is enhanced, and all changes to aspects of the environment - built and natural - enhance sustainability.
- It should provide adequate housing for the needs of all people in SW - housing provision that does not lead to a deterioration in the quality of life for residents who already live in the area.
- It should designate SW a local centre which needs support and set out how that support will be provided to the shops and businesses within the centre.
- It should, in drawing up strict requirements for high standards of design for the new built environment, make sure they apply as equally to SW as they do to Wimbledon town centre or, for example, the Village, South Park Gardens or Merton Park.
- It should also identify and set out how the dwindling heritage of SW is to be preserved and protected. There should never again be a situation that enabled one of SW's 200-year-old buildings to be demolished because it lacked protection of any form. It is not sufficient to say that the heritage of SW and CW will be enhanced as a whole, when the heritage of SW will be overlooked as a result.

Finally, in particular, because of the nature of the area as a transport hub - especially in light of the proposal to extend the tram line from South Wimbledon tube station to Sutton and beyond - it needs to pay close attention to the transport needs of the area.

If the proposals in the latest draft London Plan are adopted, for SW and CW alone to take 5,000 new homes over the lifetime of the plan, transport will have to be dramatically improved to cope. The number of services into SW tube will have to be rethought. The capacity of the Tube station will have to be rethought. The capacity of the trains heading from SW will have to be rethought.

And, in any eventuality, there must be NO DECREASE in the number of services to SW as a result of the development of the Northern Line branch line to Nine Elms, as is being proposed at present.

As you will hopefully be aware, a group in SW is currently working on a South Wimbledon Enhancement Plan (SWEPP). It is a community generated document which group members believe sets out the needs of our area and our community. It has been carried out in conjunction with councillors and council officers. It would highly remiss if, with so much cooperative work having been carried out, the proposals within the SWEPP are not included in the Local Plan 2020.

I hope you will take our submission on board.

Regards

Battles Area Residents Association vice chair