

Cohen E.

(responses to the online consultation are recorded on the online survey spreadsheets – Merton Council addition)

Dear Future Merton

I have completed much of the online consultation on Merton's Local Plan 2020.

I have additional comments to make that could not be completed using the questionnaires provided.

South Wimbledon appears to have been largely neglected as a locality or centre in its own right.

It has been included with Colliers Wood which is about a mile away and has no interaction whatsoever with South Wimbledon. I would say that South Wimbledon has more interaction with Wimbledon town centre than Colliers Wood.

The only other mention of South Wimbledon is the mention of the east end of The Broadway which is bordering on South Wimbledon.

South Wimbledon has been the subject of the SWEP (South Wimbledon Enhancement Plan) which has been set up and run by members of the local community with the help of councillor Katy Neep and council officers. Much hard work has been put in by all involved.

Merton Council in April 2017, only a few months ago, themselves passed a motion which said that they would “continue to work proactively and in a meaningful way with residents in South Wimbledon to develop it into a vibrant and thriving community, that is culturally and economically progressive, and which respects its rich heritage, and as part of this welcomes the work that is already underway to develop a South Wimbledon Enhancement Plan as a result of a partnership approach between the council and local residents.”

This seems to have been completely ignored in the Local Plan 2020 consultation. Although, interestingly by comparison, the Raynes Park Enhancement Plan IS mentioned in the Raynes Park questionnaire within the consultation.

South Wimbledon should be treated as an area in its own right especially in light of the proposed redevelopment of the High Path Estate which has huge implications and ramifications for the area.

Other plans and strategies also do not include South Wimbledon, for example the Town Centre Masterplan, Core Planning Strategy and Sites and Policies and members of the community repeatedly express their concerns that South Wimbledon is a neglected part of Merton Borough.

I believe that South Wimbledon should be protected from ugly, brutalist design, high rise development which is not liked by the majority of the community although currently fashionable and favoured by architects (with limited imaginations) and planners.

The community has the right to an attractive residential area and any developments should be in keeping with the victorian/edwardian streetscape. Density can be achieved without ugly high rise. Many attractive developments have been built in the last 12-17 years. I can provide a list on request.

I notice in the video introducing the consultation ALL buildings are shown as LOW RISE with PITCHED ROOVES and CHIMNEYSS, ie the type of building that people are familiar with, like and want to live in. There were no high rise, flat roofed, brutalist style buildings shown in this video. What a contradiction to the council's planning department and future merton approach! Perhaps you could explain why this style of building was chosen for the promotional video – perhaps to lull people into the false sense of security that development would continue in the traditional style of their area? This could be seen as misleading and underhand! How curious that chimneys were even included on the buildings in the video as they are clearly no longer necessary in new properties.

Historic and attractive buildings should be preserved and incorporated in a history tour of the area. (The Wimbledon section of the consultation mentioned attracting visitors all year around via local history). South Wimbledon is extraordinarily rich in history eg Admiral Lord Nelson, John Innes and Henry Goodall Quartermain, the River Wandle, bordering Merton Priory, Merton Abbey Mills, Merton Park, Wimbledon town centre etc etc. Rose Cottage no longer exists and Merton Hall is soon to suffer similar fate. Local history is being destroyed before our eyes.

I would also like to re-iterate the points already expressed by Philip Whiteside of BARA, namely:-

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 Colliers Wood to South Wimbledon. It needs its own targeted help to improve.
2. South Wimbledon is a transport hub of much greater importance than Colliers Wood. 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 South Wimbledon will continue to be ignored because it sits between two areas of focus under the proposed Local Plan – Colliers Wood and Wimbledon.
4. Indeed, the focus of attention on Colliers Wood and Wimbledon could result in South Wimbledon 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 South Wimbledon and not Colliers Wood – ie the High Path regeneration - the lack of a specific plan for South Wimbledon 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 9,000m² 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 South Wimbledon 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 South Wimbledon: 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 South Wimbledon.
- It should ensure open space in South Wimbledon is protected, the natural environment in South Wimbledon 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 South Wimbledon - 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 South Wimbledon 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 South Wimbledon 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 South Wimbledon is to be preserved and protected. There should never again be a situation that enabled one of South Wimbledon's 200-year-old buildings to be demolished because it lacked protection of any form. Nor the planned destruction of Merton Hall, a 100+ year old, architecturally beautiful community building built for the community by a local philanthropist and in community use since its inception until a few months ago. It is not sufficient to say that the heritage of South

Wimbledon and Colliers Wood will be enhanced as a whole, when the heritage of South Wimbledon 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 South Wimbledon and Colliers Wood 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 South Wimbledon tube will have to be rethought. The capacity of the Tube station will have to be rethought. The capacity of the trains heading from South Wimbledon will have to be rethought.

And, in any eventuality, there must be NO DECREASE in the number of services to South Wimbledon 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 South Wimbledon is currently working on a South Wimbledon Enhancement Plan (SWEP). 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 SWEP are not included in the Local Plan 2020.