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My first comment is that the Character Study Document is poorly presented for on-line viewing, requiring magnification of each page and consequent extensive scrolling. Incidentally, the email address shown for responses contains 4 erroneous spaces if copied and pasted as I did, rather than clicking on the link (which appears to be correct).

The plan for 900 additional properties per year seems excessive in this area. That increase would suggest an annual increase in population of c. 2,000 people, c. 500 cars with consequent additional demands on infrastructure and facilities. With extensive and unprecedented changes in the national and local situation currently being experienced (e.g. Covid pandemic – impact on working arrangements, Brexit – population changes, Government relocations - employment requirements, vacation of buildings, and impact on local population changes), I would suggest that any such plans may have been made on a flawed basis.

Overpopulation and additional buildings will have a detrimental impact on the current residents and the infrastructure and facilities provided. I would hope that impact assessments have been undertaken on the demands for schools, hospitals, GP surgeries, public transport, increases in existing identified concerns of traffic flows and congestion, pollution, parking, electric vehicle charging points (particularly for any developments where it is not practical to charge vehicles at the home, although I note that mention is made of EV charging points in the public realm, will this be sufficient?).

Of particular concern are the “backland”/“infill” sites mentioned. These in particular would detract from the current nature of the locality, and potentially impact on the privacy and amenity of existing residents. The current pandemic has highlighted the need for enjoyment of the home and outside space for wellbeing and mental health. Further building may have an adverse effect in this regard. In addition there is likely to be an impact on financial value of existing properties, even before detailed plans are submitted as land searches may reveal the Council’s “Opportunity Area” for the acceptability of this type of development. This is demonstrated on page 134 in relation to Conservation Areas:

“The historic environment is a vital part of creating a sense of place; not only do local people value the historic environment and historic assets, they often add financial value to the property”.

I’m not sure why this was limited to Conservation Areas as similar considerations apply to the Merton Park Ward generally with it’s history and nature.

I am concerned that there will be a detrimental impact on the current nature of the locality. The current suburban feel to the neighbourhood is likely to deteriorate with additional and more densely situated/taller buildings. The Merton Park Ward has a very distinct character and many green areas which should be maintained as they are part of the attraction of living in this area.