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Some longer notes to accompany the survey reply:

This is a weak LIP submission and it compares poorly with many boroughs across London. It is disappointing that Merton Council – with three months longer than every other London borough – failed to even proof read the submission before submitting the draft to TfL. The document is riddled with spelling errors and typos e.g. for how long has Rayne’s Park been spelled with an apostrophe?

Para 2.35: notes that modal share for walking, cycling and public transport are falling, yet the document does little to propose interventions that could achieve meaningful increases. I believe this document will do little to improve modal share for walking, cycling and public transport.

Para 2.40: “*an expanded network .. of cycle routes*” – the LIP3 submission fails to mention the quietway schemes which TfL has given considerable funds to Merton to plan e.g. Colliers Wood – Morden – Sutton route, nor the east-west Colliers Wood – Wimbledon Chase route. The latter provided an interesting insight into Merton Council’s attitude to cycle route planning: the borough’s planning officers appeared to have little prior knowledge of TfL’s planning application to rebuild the wall on Merantun Way at Merton Abbey, and a Labour cabinet member even objected to it (also demonstrating his ignorance of cycling infrastructure by arguing that people riding bicycles are supposed to dismount and walk across toucan crossings – a traffic light crossing designed for cyclists).

Para 2.42: good to see a link between health benefits and cycling/walking, especially in the east of the borough where health outcomes are relatively poor compared to the affluent west. However, this LIP3 submission doesn’t actually propose anything useful. For example, in the east of the borough, Pollards Hill & Longthornton, nothing is usefully proposed regarding better cycling infrastructure. Looking north from Streatham Vale, TfL cycle quietway route 5 runs through Lambeth into Croydon, skirting the north side of the borough of Merton. Merton Council is missing a significant network planning opportunity to improve south to north/north-east cycle route to link to Q5 and onwards.

Para 2.42 “*Colliers Wood, Wimbledon, Mitcham Rayne’s Park (sic), and Morden .. have significant potential for cycling trips*”. Yes, but this submission does not actually propose anything useful to achieve this in terms of better cycle network planning. For example, there is next to no safe cycle route from the south of the borough to Colliers Wood underground station (especially as the LIP3 document fails to mention once-proposed quietway routes, as noted above). There’s no safe cycle routes direct to Wimbledon Station – everything ends hundreds of yards short, discriminating against people with impaired mobility and unable to push a dismounted bicycle for any distance. Morden’s cycle routes are a muddle of on/off pavement shared-use paths. Mitcham has received £17m of regeneration investment, yet the cycle routes southwards towards Carshalton give up at the duck pond and roundabout.

It's all well suggesting opportunity, but this document fails to submit joined-up network proposals to turn those cycling & walking opportunities in to reality. There's not enough proposed to achieve the objective stated on page 81 of 29% of residents being within 400m of high quality cycle network by 2021.

Para 2.43 – is correct in that walking journeys are often hindered by busy, traffic dominated roads. But again, nothing is actually proposed to address this. For example, where's a proposal to reduce the number of two-stage staggered crossings, so that crossing busy roads is quicker and safer? What about increasing pedestrian priority (longer green-man times) at such crossings, so that local journeys on foot are not slowed down by non-borough motorists, e.g. along the A24 corridor? (The relatively new toucan crossing outside Colliers Wood library is good example - you can wait several minutes for a green-man). Every commercial and transport centre in Merton is blighted with a gyratory – other London boroughs are removing these. Merton rebuilt the one in Mitcham.

I can't immediately see anything in the draft submission about eliminating rat-running traffic. For example, the Lavender Fields area between Western Road and London Road/Figges March is blighted with AM/PM rat-running, and this got steadily worse during the Mitcham regeneration works. Motorists will queue half-way down Lavender Avenue for 15-20 mins - with engines running - to access London Road or Western Road. As a result, there's a big disincentive to cycling and walking as the 20mph speed limit is routinely ignored outside rush hours. Some simple filters would stem the rat-running by non-residents and could make this again a nice, quiet low-traffic area to live.

Transport planning in Merton is – and in this document continues to be – dominated by keeping motorised traffic flowing. And this has created huge disincentives to local, active travel.

Paras 3.10 & 5.40 – I am struggling to make sense of the merit in figure 10, potential cycle paths. For example, in the east of the borough:

- J Lavender Park path, from Oakmead Place to Prince George's Road – this looks like a disguised attempt to use LIP cycling funds to relay the brick path disrupted by tree routes. Whilst relaying the bricks would be nice, tweaking this path does nothing to improve network permeability.
- J Figges Marsh path – similar to above, a request for funds to tidy up a footpath. Whilst nice, this completely ignores what is the primary cycle route from Mitcham to Tooting, which is along London Road (not the Figges Marsh footpath). Every year, the council seeks TfL funds to do something about the Figges Marsh roundabout – when will it propose a high quality cycle path that links Mitcham to Tooting and onwards on cycleway CS7?
- J Commonsides West – an example of poor proof reading – “Security of State approval”, not the “Secretary”? Whilst a better cycle path would be desirable, the proposal fails overall as it gives up at the Mitcham duck pond/ roundabout. This only works if Merton Council continues to cling hold to the 1980s cycling infrastructure handbook that it has been using for 30 years, and users are

expected to reach Mitcham using shared-use pavements and toucan crossings. We know from Walthamstow, Kingston, Enfield, LCDS and other investments what good cycle network planning looks like, and how roundabouts can be reengineered for cycle traffic. A 1980's standard design will no longer suffice.

-) Mitcham Common/ Windmill Road/ Croydon Road/ Beddington Lane crossing. This is most half-baked idea in the whole LIP3 submission – that people riding bicycles will be expected to dismount and act as pedestrians to cross between the shared-use pavements. This is just lazy planning and, given that 15% of people riding bicycles in London have some form of disability, arguably fails Equality Act requirements.
-) I'm puzzled about the comment about the Morden Hall quietway being in doubt. Isn't Sutton Council expecting it to proceed as part of the overall Colliers Wood – Morden – Sutton route?

Some examples of things I was expecting in the LIP3 submission:

-) Quietway routes – Colliers Wood to Morden via Morden Hall Park, and the east-west route to Wimbledon Chase for which TfL has been granted planning permission to rebuild the wall at Merton Abbey.
-) The Wimbledon to Raynes Park railway path – which is the old cycle route LCN208. Merton Council, Sustrans and TfL are in a real muddle as to whether this quietway route is finished, being built or not started. At the least, the dangerous crossing at Lower Downs Road needs to be addressed. Waiting another 15 years for Crossrail2 would be negligent.

Opportunities missing from this document:

-) On the east side of the borough, better cycle network links between Longthornton/ Pollards Hill to the Quietway 5 route which skirts the northern boundary with Lambeth and Croydon.
-) Mitcham to Tooting along London Road on Figges Marsh – it's the main cycle corridor, and could carry a lot of cycle traffic from south of the borough/ Carshalton with some simple interventions.
-) Cycling around the Cricket Green is a mess – there's a toucan crossing outside Vestry Hall (with illuminated bicycles) where cyclists are expected to dismount. This should be fixed, especially from an Equality Act point of view.
-) Colliers Wood needs better cycle network planning towards Mitcham. I've never seen anyone over 5 years old cycling on the shared-use pavements around Merantun Way – and I've never used them either. You need to create a better semi-segregated route south from Colliers Wood tube - it was proposed in the failed mini-Holland bid.

- J) Mitcham Common – Windmill Road – needs to have a shared-use pavement upgrade to match those on Croydon Road and Beddington Lane. Otherwise, you’re just admitting those new paths are to stop HGVs squashing cyclists on their way to the incinerator, rather than a genuine cycle network improvement.
- J) Morden Hall Road/ St Helliers Roundabout – needs to be brought up to date with new cycling infrastructure. The 1980s style intervention is out-of-date, and pushing cyclists off a shared-use pavement back on the carriageway to navigate the roundabout is no longer acceptable. It’s a primary cycle route, and arguing that cyclists can instead go round-the-houses on some half-funded quietway scheme isn’t acceptable either. It is TfL TLRN and the council should push TfL to do better.
- J) Following the death of a young man riding a bicycle along Wimbledon Common’s Parkside a few months ago, this heavily used cycle route from Wimbledon to Tibbets Corner needs to be looked at too. It’s a 30 mph road – frequently exceeded by motorised traffic – and has a high number of pinch-points at the informal island pedestrian crossings. In my experience, it’s not an easy route to cycle in rush hour with slower moving motors. In free flowing, 30 mph motorised traffic, it is terrifying.
- J) With AFC Wimbledon returning to Plough Lane and associated housing, the Plough Lane/ Gap Road/ Durnsford Road/ Haydon Road corridors need examining for the benefit of pedestrians and cyclists. The railway bridge on Durnsford Road is really poor for cyclists. I appreciate the bridge would be expensive to re-engineer but a camera-enforced 20mph limit would be a useful interim intervention.
- J) On-street cycle hangers – nearby boroughs such as Lambeth have installed hundreds, using TfL funds. They’re very popular – shouldn’t Merton be pushing these confidently, especially in areas with lots of flats rather than houses?

(Jumping forward to objectives on page 81, I fail to see how the borough can achieve a target of 29% of residents being within 400m of a high-quality cycle network – an increase from 3% on the 2016 baseline. There’s nowhere near enough cycle network planned to achieve this. And to be clear, painting dashed lines advisory cycle lanes on roads, and shared-use pavements with the council’s well-loved “cyclist dismount” signs, won’t count towards ‘high-quality’ either).

Paras 3.14 onwards regarding school travel – it would be good to see school-centered walking and cycle network planning, preferably as projects involving pupils, teachers and parents.

It would be helpful if Merton Council and MPS Merton actually enforced parking restrictions around schools e.g. the cycle path on High Path outside Merton Abbey Primary School is blocked every afternoon by pavement-parking parents waiting for their kids. What incentive is there to walk or cycle to this primary – or the forthcoming secondary school – when a few selfish parents are breaking road traffic laws to make it unattractive?

Para 3.75 – electric vehicle charging points – whilst desirable, can Merton Council do more to ensure these are placed in islands in the carriageway rather than on the pavement? Why should even more pedestrian space be taken away to benefit motorists?

Equality Assessment/ Environment Assessment.

These documents are disappointing, as they lack any meaningful narrative to justify the red-amber-green shading against individual initiatives. The assessments prepared by every other borough, that I've had time to read, did include narrative justification. It's another example of how Merton's submission is comparatively light-weight.