Objectives

8.1 A successful and balanced provision of transport infrastructure and facilities, for vehicles, public transport, pedestrians and cyclists, will be a key factor in the sustainable regeneration of Mitcham town centre. The Key Aim of this SPD is to achieve regeneration of the town centre through an economically sustainable, commercially viable, comprehensive development. To achieve the objective of enhancing accessibility to and around the town centre, transport proposals will have to:

- ensure sufficient traffic capacity to meet the needs of the town centre
- achieve effective bus penetration in both directions of the core area
- facilitate convenient movement for pedestrians and cyclists to and around the whole town centre
- safeguard the proposed tram route

Issues

Vehicular Traffic

8.2 Much of the public realm of the town centre is dominated by vehicular traffic, with a large proportion being through traffic, due to lack of alternative routes in the wider road network. Most routes leading to the town centre are relatively narrow. However, within the core area, the road network is designed to provide increased capacity for vehicles, notably on Holborn Way, the gyratory and on St Mark’s Road. Through much of the day and especially at the peaks, due to the volumes of traffic, this does not have the effect of maintaining the flow of traffic through the town centre, but ensures that large numbers of slow moving vehicles become congested in the town centre, filling up the road capacity and creating an unpleasant and polluted environment for those using the town centre. The gyratory has a significant severance effect for pedestrians and occupies a large part of the town centre, creating an “island” of poorly accessible development.

8.3 In Holborn Way, the additional road capacity results in higher speeds outside peak periods and queues at the junctions with lower capacity roads at each end, particularly at peak periods. Similarly the gyratory allows higher speeds to develop outside peak periods and lengths and makes more complex, a significant number of trips. The wide section of St. Mark’s Road remains significantly underused throughout the day. The inconsistent capacity along the routes passing through the town centre causes queuing at the approaches to the core area and inconsistent, rather than smooth flowing traffic speeds.

8.4 These wide roads around the core area represent a major obstacle to easy pedestrian movement, concentrate air pollution and create a hostile and unpleasant environment. This core area is supposed to function as the most pedestrian active part of the town centre, with a concentration of retail and other footfall sensitive uses. To operate successfully as such, it should have the lowest levels of pollution, the most pleasant environment and the highest level of pedestrian activity.

Parking & CPZ

8.5 Car parking in the town centre is currently provided by five surface car parks at Sibthorp Road (44), Majestic Way (82 - not public), Raleigh Gardens (30), Iceland (41 - not public) and Blockbuster Netto (56 - not public); and by a multi-storey car park above the Somerfield foodstore (277). This provides 530 spaces for the town centre. In addition there is a small Council surface car park north of the town centre on London Road (next to Dreams Bedstore) providing 36 spaces. Also, part of the Majestic Way car park, providing 16 spaces has recently been sold.

8.6 The multi-storey car park offers a poor quality environment and occasionally attracts anti-social behaviour and is thus underused. The car parks are generally of small size, poor quality and scattered around the town centre, the surface car parks representing an inefficient use of land in such an urban environment. Attractive, high quality parking that is safe, secure and convenient is an important factor in attracting visitors to the town centre. New parking provision must fulfil these requirements in any regeneration proposals.

8.7 There is no controlled parking zone (CPZ) covering the town centre and surrounding streets. Also there is minimal other parking control in the form of traditional yellow line markings. Consequently, the residential streets around the town centre are used for parking by commuters, shoppers and other visitors alike. Although the situation does not yet cause widespread tensions with residents, there are pockets of parking problems in places around the town centre. The regeneration of the town centre will bring increased retail and residential provision and is likely to exacerbate such problems. These will need to be properly managed. Thus a CPZ may need to be considered. Any proposals including a CPZ should be developed in close consultation with the Council’s Street Management Section.

Pedestrians & Cyclists

8.8 The main traffic routes through the town centre act as barriers for pedestrian movement (complexity & time required to cross) and effectively isolate the core pedestrianised area from the remainder of the town centre. Crossing most of the main roads is difficult and intimidating for pedestrians. This is mainly due to the large size of junctions, width of the roads and the design of pedestrian crossings. The majority of the crossings are complicated, staggered or broken into a number of steps, requiring pedestrians to wait at traffic islands surrounded by moving traffic.

8.9 Pedestrian guard railing is used extensively around crossing points, which further contributes to the sense of severance. Research has shown that the use of guard rails, which often prevent movement along pedestrian desire lines, leads to significant increase in the number of “illegal” crossings, (i.e. crossings outside the designated area and outside the green man phase).
There are also locations where significant pedestrian routes are not provided with crossing facilities. All of the above contributes to low pedestrian accessibility levels to and from the core pedestrianised area and between the two sides of London Road, in the areas to the north and south of the core, as shown in the pedestrian accessibility model of Mitcham (see Plan 14).

A number of cycle routes are planned to converge at Mitcham town centre, some of which remain to be implemented (see Para. 7.10) and for which there is not yet funding. Currently, illegal cycling in pedestrianised areas occasionally causes problems. The complex road layout is also not cycle friendly. The town centre is therefore not generally cycle friendly, being either busy road or pedestrian area. A large residential catchment area and good bus services presents the opportunity for improved cycle-bus interchange. However there are no changing or secure cycle storage facilities in the town centre to encourage this. Cycle parking provision in the town centre is very limited, and therefore does little to encourage cycling to the town centre.

Mitcham town centre is relatively well served by buses and, due to the lack of rail services, this is primarily responsible for its reasonably high PTAL level of 4. Thus buses play an important role in maintaining the accessibility of Mitcham to the wider area.

Bus routes currently stop at a variety of stops on-street locations around the town centre, often some distance from each other. This often makes interchange between routes inconvenient. This is largely due to the wide variety of routes and the nature of the road network. Despite this, the core pedestrianised area is not conveniently served by bus stops (stop H is the closest but is only south/east bound and often the cause of congestion). Therefore, whilst the complex road junctions reduce pedestrian accessibility, the poor arrangement of bus stops reduces bus accessibility.

Only one service terminates in the town centre, but a separate lay-by and layover space provided for it takes up much space in the town centre and contributes to the complexity of the adjacent road junction (other services terminate outside the town centre on Commons West). Bus lanes are provided northbound along Holborn Way, London Road (north), Commons West/Upper Green East and on Raleigh Gardens gyratory. A northbound bus lane is due to be provided on London Road (south) between the town centre and Cricket Green to the south. The Council also wishes to implement a westbound bus lane on Western Road.

Regeneration proposals need to address these issues to bring significant improvements to bus services to maintain and, if possible, improve the PTAL accessibility of the town centre. Provision of improved bus facilities and services will be an important element in ensuring new development is both adequately and sustainably served by a range of transport modes, given the road network has a finite capacity that is often saturated at peak periods. Regeneration proposals should include a reassessment of location of bus stops to effect a better interchange of services and better serve the pedestrianised core, whilst using valuable town centre land efficiently.

Following is transport provision guidance that any regeneration proposal should follow. This should be read in conjunction with Plan 16. Transport proposals must be able to demonstrate they are feasible, workable and implementable, including any traffic surveys and modelling necessary. All routes through the town centre are part of the London Bus Priority Network, are London Distributor Roads and are part of the Strategic Road Network under the control of Transport for London (TfL). Any transport proposals should be developed in close consultation with TfL and must be subject to their approval before any planning permission is granted by the Council.

Approach

Proposals for the regeneration of the town centre must include a comprehensive and co-ordinated approach to delivering both transport improvements and demonstrating the transport system is capable of successfully serving a redeveloped town centre. There should be an emphasis on provision for alternative modes to the car to encourage more sustainable modes of travel and therefore reduce the transport impact of the development, both locally and on the Strategic Route Network (SRN). Thus the town centre must be addressed as a whole, taking into account development of all sites identified in the town centre core, and detailed proposals be included with any planning applications in the form of a Transport Impact Assessment and Green Travel Plan.
Vehicular Traffic

8.18 ADDRESS CONGESTION, ROAD CAPACITY AND TRAFFIC FLOW THROUGH THE TOWN CENTRE.

Proposals should aim to improve the flow of vehicles through careful management and design of junctions and signal phasing through the town centre and on the wider road network. Proposals should aim to provide sufficient road capacity to serve proposed new development whilst, through their design, encouraging maximum use of public transport and reducing the negative effects of roads on other users, notably pedestrians. Capacity should be provided where most needed and consideration given to redistribution or alteration of capacity if it mitigates against the smooth flow of traffic.

8.19 ADDRESS THE ROLE AND FUNCTION OF THE GYRATORY.

Proposals should produce options for the gyratory around Raleigh Gardens. The aim should be to reduce the negative effects of traffic, reduce pedestrian severance and minimise the amount of land take for vehicles. Options should range from a reallocation/re-ordering of road space, altering signal and pedestrian phasing, to the removal of the gyratory altogether in order to reconnect the ‘island’ in the middle to the rest of the town centre, simplify the road layout and reduce journey lengths and the quantity of highway infrastructure. Options for the gyratory must be developed in conjunction with proposals for improved, accessible bus stopping facilities in the Public Transport Enhancement Area (see Paras. 8.33-8.35 below).

8.20 ADDRESS PEDESTRIAN SEVERANCE.

Proposals should simplify junction layouts as much as possible, reducing unnecessary land take for road space and use designs appropriate to, and encouraging appropriate town centre traffic speeds. Design of junctions should aim to simplify the routes pedestrians are required to take in order to cross roads and reduce the number of separate stages needed to do so (through physical design and signal phasing). Staggered crossings should be avoided wherever possible.

8.21 ADDRESS THE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY OF HOLBORN WAY.

Proposals should include measures to humanise and make more attractive, the environment of Holborn Way. They should consider providing a central reservation to break up the wide expanse of tarmac the road presents. Additional tree planting should be considered for the west side of the road to provide more attractive and well defined edge. Tree planting should also be considered on the east side of the road to improve the environment for building frontages.

8.22 REALIGNMENT OF ST. MARK’S ROAD.

In order to provide adequate space for a larger foodstore, St. Mark’s Road should be moved northwards (see Plan 16). Opportunity should be taken to provide only the necessary road space required to service the foodstore, access parking and the residential area beyond. Large areas of blank frontages facing the street should be avoided in any design for service and parking access. Active frontages with access to residential units above should be provided.

Parking & CPZ

8.23 PROVISION OF PARKING.

The provision of public parking in new development should take the opportunity to consolidate the many small surface car parks into a smaller number of larger car parks. These should be located around the town centre core, to encourage walking into the core area where possible and avoid unnecessary vehicle movements across the town centre to access car parks. Surface car parks are inefficient use of urban land and should not be provided, except to the rear of the community facilities building. The main locations for car parks should be as shown on Plan 16, at the retail foodstore anchor, community facilities building, and at Raleigh Gardens and the Blockbuster/Netto site. All parking (including private residential) should be provided according to Council parking standards and taking into account whether a CPZ is proposed.

8.24 QUALITY AND QUANTITY OF PARKING.

New car parks must be of a high environmental quality and be designed to be secure, safe and attractive, issues such as layout, access, ease of orientation, convenience of use, sense of security, internal design, materials, colours and lighting will all be important in ensuring this and must be addressed fully and successfully in any new car park design. The quantity of parking provided must be adequate to serve the proposed development whilst not undermining sustainable transport policies. In general therefore, provision of long-term parking should be avoided. In addition to vehicle parking, new development should provide for adequate and convenient motorcycle parking. Taxis are an important part of a public transport strategy as many people who arrive by bus will return home by taxi having bought goods in the town centre. Therefore adequate taxi facilities should be provided that are clearly visible and easy to reach from the town centre core.

8.25 CONTROLLED PARKING ZONE.

Regeneration proposals that require the introduction of a CPZ in order to successfully deal with parking standards and density, must make this clear from the outset. Any CPZ proposals must be discussed and developed in close consultation with the Council in order to ensure they are workable, appropriate and consulted on and implemented in accordance with Council policy and procedures.

Pedestrians & Cyclists

8.26 SIMPLIFY PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS AT MAJOR JUNCTIONS.

Following on from the guidance at Para. 8.20 above, there are three major junctions that present complex and inconvenient crossing facilities for pedestrians. These are the junctions at the north and south ends of Holborn Way and the junction with London Road and Lock’s Lane at Figgie’s Marsh. Any proposals should aim to significantly improve the quality of crossing facilities for pedestrians in terms of improving environmental quality, reducing complexity and reducing time taken to cross the junction.

8.27 The retiling of the junction between Holborn Way, London Road and St. Mark’s Road presents the opportunity to provide a pedestrian friendly layout that improves accessibility to the parade of small local shops to the north of the town centre core. The land take of the junction at the south end of Holborn Way should be significantly reduced, facilitated by the removal of bus stops H, C, D & G (see Para. 8.35 below). This will enable the provision of a new corner landmark building adjacent to No. 9a Upper Green West (chip shop) and also allow development Site 7 (Iseland) to be increased in size (see Paras. 7.54 & 7.61 above).

8.28 Pedestrian crossings on the gyratory at the junctions of London Road with Raleigh Gardens and Upper Green East/West are not complex but small and cannot be crossed in one stage. Proposals should seek to enlarge the islands and investigate alternative signal phasing to better favour pedestrians. Alternatively, in conjunction with proposals for addressing the road layout, relocation of the crossings at these junctions may be considered. Proposals should aim to site crossings on, or as close to pedestrian desire lines as possible, and to reduce the amount of psychological barriers and highway infrastructure, such as guard railing, junction boxes, lighting columns, signs and poles.

8.29 PROVISION OF NEW CROSSINGS.

New and improved crossings and pedestrian routes should be provided (with appropriate assessment where required) as shown on Plan 16 and examples given of possible locations in this paragraph. At the junction at the south end of Holborn Way there is currently no crossing facility on the eastern arm of the junction linking Fair Green with Raleigh Gardens (Conservative Club); there is a long section of London Road (north) without a controlled crossing; the crossing of Holborn Way to Sadler Close is significantly offset from the desire line, the island is wide in a wide expanse of tarmac; and the link between Sadler Close and Sibthorp Road is of very poor quality.

8.30 The roundabout junction with Commonside East and West has no crossing facilities
(despite small islands at the approaches) and there is no footpath to the west side of the Three Kings Pond. Proposals should include plans to implement improved crossing facilities in association with environmental enhancements to the pond and a footpath between the pond and Commonside West. Crossing facilities from bus stop L to the core are not convenient for access to the east side of Fair Green (community facilities building). Proposal of a new crossing facility in this location should be investigated.

8.31 CONSOLIDATION OF GUARD RAILING AND OTHER HIGH-WAY INFRASTRUCTURE.

Guard railing should be kept to a minimum and removed wherever possible. Reduced, consistent traffic speeds and simplified more convenient crossings closer to desire lines should help ensure this is both feasible and safe. Planting in place of some guard railing may be appropriate in places, though should not simply be used as another means to forcibly ‘corral’ pedestrians along tortuous routes. Crossing places should be user friendly and convenient to locate to reduce the need for barriers. Guard railing, where retained, should be replaced with non-galvanised designs of a high quality, attractive and durable finish. All proposals for alterations to the highway should seek to remove and/or consolidate the quantity of highway infrastructure and avoid unnecessary clutter. New layouts and infrastructure should minimise the quantity of infrastructure and be of as high a quality design as possible.

8.32 PROVISION OF CYCLE ROUTES AND PARKING.

Transport proposals should include the provision of cycle routes to and through (or around) the town centre, adequate and convenient cycle parking in the town centre core (notably a significant increase in the number of cycle stands). Consideration should be given to providing marked cycle routes through the pedestrianised area, should convenient alternative routes not be possible. Cycle provision should be designed so as to reduce conflict with pedestrians. A covered, secure cycle storage and changing facility should be provided in conjunction with new bus stopping and interchange facilities on Holborn Way.

Public Transport

8.33 LOCATION AND PROVISION OF BUS STOPS.

Current bus stop locations do not serve the town centre effectively. To encourage more people to use public transport, to adequately serve development and help support economic viability, developers need to work in partnership with the Council and TfL to provide improved, accessible bus stopping facilities that penetrate the heart of the town centre and serve the whole of the centre effectively. For the purposes of public transport provision, the ‘heart’, or area that improved services must penetrate is shown on Plan 16, entitled ‘Public Transport Enhancement Area’. In order to do this conveniently, effectively and facilitate good interchange, bus routes that are provided stopping facilities in the Public Transport Enhancement Area should include stops for buses in both directions of the route.

8.34 Land is at a premium in the town centre and any bus stopping facilities provided in the Public Transport Enhancement Area must not unduly, or inefficiently use land that could otherwise be used for development and the provision of town centre facilities such as shops, housing and community uses. The provision of facilities must also take into account the needs of other users, modes of transport and the effect on the character and appearance of the streets and spaces in the town centre, as well as perceptions of safety and security. Due to the many competing demands for space in the town centre, it may not be possible to provide a bus stopping facility that caters for all routes (though the maximum should be aimed for). Therefore consideration must be given to possible alterations or enhancements to other bus stops close to the Public Transport Enhancement Area (see Para. 8.37 below).

8.35 Provision of improved bus stop facilities in the Public Transport Enhancement Area is likely to result in the removal and relocation of stops H, C, D & G on Raleigh Gardens and Fair Green. This will enable development Site 7 (Iceland) to be increased in size, and the provision of a new landmark building adjacent to No. 9a Upper Green West at the entrance to Fair Green (see Paras. 7.54 & 7.61 above). It will also contribute to the simplification of this junction to significantly improve pedestrian accessibility to the town centre. Proposals for the provision of improved bus stop facilities in the Public Transport Enhancement Area must be developed in conjunction with those for alterations to the gyratory (see Para. 8.19 above).

8.36 RELOCATION OF LAYOVER SPACE.

Unproductive layover space should not be located in the town centre where there are many competing demands for space, particularly as new stops need to use space as efficiently as possible. Stop G serves Route 200 which terminates and includes layover space. This almost doubles the width of the very short stretch of Raleigh Gardens and, combined with other nearby stops and the large road junction, makes for the single most unpleasant, traffic dominated, pedestrian hostile space in the town centre. Alternative arrangements should be made for the required layover space to be provided outside the town centre.

8.37 ALTERATIONS TO OTHER BUS STOPS.

The provision of new bus stopping arrangements in the Public Transport Enhancement Area may have implications for other bus stops that may require alteration. Also, scope is likely to exist to improve bus stop provision and facilities at the existing stops outside this Area. These include stops A & B to the north, stops J & L to the east and stops E & M to the south. Although most of these stops are relatively convenient to the town centre, improvements may be necessary if provision for all routes cannot be made within the Area. Opportunity may also exist for improvements to bus stopping arrangements in the wider area. Transport proposals should explore the scope for such improvements through an assessment of the locations of all bus stops in the study area. No bus stop capacity should be lost that is detrimental to the provision of improved bus facilities.

8.38 GENERAL BUS SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS.

In order to increase the numbers of people using public transport and reduce the pressure on the overcrowded road network, regeneration proposals should consider opportunities for providing more general improvements. This could include initiatives such as alterations to bus routes, improvements in service frequencies, provision of new routes, improving bus links to surrounding rail stations and provision of real-time information systems. To ensure public transport plays the fullest role possible in the improved accessibility to Mitcham, facilities need to be of the highest quality and this is likely to require a step-change improvement in provision. Provision must consist of quality covered waiting facilities; high quality lighting to improve security and perceived safety; real-time information on arrival times; good quality and clear information provision and marketing; and provision of priority measures to aid reliability and improve journey times where possible.

8.39 PROTECTION OF TRAMLINK ALIGNMENT.

The Council is working in partnership with TfL to extend the Tramlink network through Mitcham town centre. Although this is a long term proposal, especially compared to the timescale for regeneration of the town centre, studies have been undertaken to establish route options. It is therefore important that redevelopment proposals do not prejudice the implementation of a tram through the town centre. The potential route alignment for the Tramlink extension is shown on Plan 16. Proposals for the town centre should safeguard the tram route and demonstrate that adequate space is provided in the pedestrianised part of London Road‘ for two-way tram operations, platforms, cycle tracks and projected pedestrian flows.

8.40 In developing satisfactory proposals to allow for future provision of tram services, due regard must be given to other requirements in this brief relating to urban design, townscape, locally listed buildings, local distinctiveness and community safety. The arrangement, location and design of infrastructure, including platforms, should be based on an acceptable balance
between urban design, transport and commercial requirements in the SPD. Such infrastructure should not prejudice the character and open nature of the Fair Green nor the linear character and human scale of the pedestrianised London Road as a street.

8.41 New development must not propose or allow for, a design solution for the tram, that is likely to present future technical or legal obstacles to successful implementation of a tram service in the future, that cannot be reasonably avoided as part of the town centre regeneration. Development proposals in relation to safeguarding future tram provision must be designed to the satisfaction of the Council and Transport for London, with due regard given to the HSE Railway Safety Principles. Development proposals that would prejudice the future provision of a tram service are likely to be refused planning permission.

*In this definition London Road is the length of street between Holborn Way to the north and Majestic Way to the south.

8.42 PROVISION OF EASTFIELDS RAIL STATION. The regeneration should secure the provision of Eastfields station as proposed in the UDP (Policy PT.2). This should be achieved in co-ordination with TfL and Network Rail and include extended or diverted bus routes to link the station with the town centre and improvements to the quality of the direct pedestrian route via Laburnum Road.

**Transport Strategy**

8.43 Transport proposals should be developed in partnership with key stakeholders including the Council, Transport for London and the emergency services to provide a co-ordinated transport strategy supporting and enabling the successful regeneration of Mitcham town centre. It should take a holistic approach, not only in embracing all modes, but being fully integrated with the wider economic, urban design and environmental aims of this SPD.

8.44 The strategy should aim to maximise modal split in favour of public transport, walking and cycling, whilst managing through vehicular traffic and minimising its detrimental effect on the town centre environment. Proposals should be in accordance with Council planning and transport policies, and in conformity with the aims of the Local Implementation Plan (see Section 14 – Background Documents).

8.45 The strategy should be submitted as part of a combined Transport Impact Assessment and Green Travel Plan. The strategy must be supported by sound analysis, including detailed traffic modelling and testing that demonstrates the feasibility of the proposals. The strategy should be evolved, based on the guidance in this SPD, in close dialogue with Transport for London and the Council’s transport planning officers.

9.0 Development Guidance for Sites Outside Core Regeneration Area

9.1 In addition to the core area that the main design and development guidance focuses on, a number of other sites have development potential that can contribute to the regeneration of Mitcham. Brief design guidelines for these sites are given below. These sites are shown on Plan 17. Any development proposals for these sites should be in accordance with policies in the Council’s adopted Unitary Development Plan. Guidance given in this section on suitable land uses (for sites that are not Proposals Sites in the UDP) are based on site context and characteristics, but proposals will also be required to conform with UDP policy in this respect, based on existing land uses.

Site A: NOS. 190-200 LONDON ROAD (REMAINDER OF UDP SITE 4.MI)

9.2 The UDP allocates this site for residential and office (B1) use. The larger, northern part of the site has already been developed, with planning permission granted for offices, houses and flats. The office element was subsequently granted change of use to a doctor’s surgery, which now occupies the ground floor. The building is rather plain in appearance, the surgery presents a poor quality dead frontage at street level and the corner of the building fails to provide an attractive and meaningful entrance to either the building or the town centre.

9.3 Development on the remainder of the site should avoid these negative design features. Given the permission for change of use to a surgery, it is considered that a flexible approach be taken to the provision of a

Plan 17 Potential Development Sites Outside the Core

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