

## **From: Elspeth Clarke, M.B.E.**

(Secretary, St Helier Residents' Group; Member of the Patient Participation Group, Morden Hall Medical Centre; local school governor; member of Liaison Group at the Ahmadiyya/Baitul Futuh Mosque; student at Merton Adult Education at Marlborough Hall; and allotment holder!! (Well, it all keeps me from getting into mischief...))

## **Sites: Morden Clinic/Morden Medical Centre Wimbledon Library/Marlborough Hall**

Policies:

**DM F2 - Sustainable drainage systems**

**DM D7 Shop front design, alterations and advertising**

**DM R7: Markets**

**DM R5 - Food and drink**

I should like to make some comments on the above document, please.

First of all, nothing would please me more than seeing my town, Morden, transformed from the dingy, unattractive and dying town centre it currently is. HOWEVER, I need to ask the following questions:

Yes, we do need more housing but of the "small flat for single people" variety - not homes for families! If you go down THAT route, it will have a huge impact on the need for more school places (we're already grappling with that problem with the CURRENT number of children in the borough!). You wouldn't just need schools to expand - AGAIN - you'd need to build new schools. And where would these be sited? You say that they would be part of new developments - where in Merton is there space for this?

One of the sites you have identified for redevelopment is **site 24 - Morden Clinic/Morden Hall Medical Centre, in Morden Road (page 48)**. You say that it would be good to enlarge this building as it has .."good level of access to public transport (PTAL 5)". Actually, no, it doesn't! This is something we have raised at both the St Helier Residents' meetings and the Patient Participation Group at Morden Hall Medical Centre! There is no bus stop or tube station nearer than about a 10-15 minute walk. If you're feeling unwell, that's a bit of a journey! We have already asked TfL to reinstate the bus stop outside the building (which existed when the building was a library) but they have refused on the grounds that there aren't enough people wanting it. Absolute rubbish - the Medical Centre has approx. 14,000 patients, and sees 1,000 of them per week. There is a bus stop on the OTHER side of the road to the Medical Centre, but not one if you're coming from the North Cheam/Morden direction. If you make the building bigger and therefore

(presumably) take on more patients, you will make the problem even worse. And if you're getting rid of the local car parks as well, ill/elderly/disabled patients will be able to get there only by mini cab - which gets expensive when you have to visit on a regular basis.

Regarding communication of the above proposal, I found it somewhat worrying that no-one at the medical centre knew anything about these proposals. Seems a little odd!

In addition, this medical centre already has the largest number of patients in the borough. It is not unusual to have to wait 2-4 **WEEKS** to see one's favourite GP - something we patients are keen to do - and are encouraged to do by the doctors themselves! If they are to take on MORE patients, that will make the problem even worse.

Another site for re-development is **Wimbledon Library/Marlborough Hall (site 16, page 32)**: you talk about the Library itself and then go on to say that, regarding a redevelopment, "...the remainder of the site would be **considered** for an appropriate mix of any of the following: Community (DI use class) and retail (A1 use class)". Well, what happens to all the adult education classes provided by Merton Adult Education??? They take place in Marlborough Hall - I know - I'm one of their students. Marlborough Hall has just had a great deal of money spent on it (in the region of £180k, I believe) refurbishing and upgrading it, to provide a "fit for purpose" site for adult learners. What happens to them???? Marlborough Hall is a popular venue for students because of the excellent transport facilities - bus, tube, tram and train only a few minutes' walk away. Adult education is SUCH an important part of Merton's responsibilities - surely you're not just going to chuck the students out? You say in part 1 - **DM C2 Education - item 3.16** - "Other education facilities such as those for adult training....need to be assessed by means of Policy DM C1" etc.

**DM F2 - Sustainable drainage systems (item 8.16)** - the damage Merton suffers during heavy rain would be far less serious if the Council would enforce the rules about NOT paving over front gardens! This regulation came in, I believe, in October 2008 yet householders are STILL paving over their entire front garden, with non-permeable surfaces, meaning that rainwater simply runs off it, into the road or into other people's properties! When walking round the Morden area, I am forever seeing newly laid paving stones/paviors which totally cover people's front gardens. Why does the Council not do something about THIS??? It's not rocket science!

**DM D7 Shop front design, alterations and advertising** - I understood from a task group (re Merton Town Centres) in which I was involved some 18 months ago (chaired by Cllr Nelless) that the Council has no powers to force shopkeepers to either conform or "tidy up/freshen up" their signage, shop fronts, etc. Frankly, far too many of them are a disgrace. So how would this be managed, in a new scheme? Would new laws have to be introduced?

**DM R7: Markets** - I'm all for local markets - particularly street markets, and

enjoy the occasional ones that come to Wimbledon but you mention that "...the street markets at Mitcham and Morden town centre" were assessed.

**MORDEN DOESN'T HAVE A STREET MARKET!** The Council tried to set one up some years ago and it failed miserably - mainly because the few stalls set up contained a disappointing range of "stuff". I believe there might be one or two stall holders on the corner of London and Abbotsbury Road, once a week, but that hardly constitutes a "street market". But it would be **GREAT TO HAVE ONE!** I lived in Walthamstow for many years - that is a fairly deprived area but its street market was just fantastic. It also brought a huge footfall for all the shops up and down the High Street! Talk to Waltham Forest and find out how they do it!!

**DM R5 - Food and drink** - I'm a little confused about mixed messages on fast food outlets. In one place (Hot food takeaway - item (f)), you indicate that they would not be encouraged. But in item 1.76, you say that you could have up to 3 hot food take-aways per 10 consecutive shops in a parade. That could add up to a heck of a lot of fast food take-aways! Apart from the unhealthy aspects of this food, it also has a very bad knock-on effect for the environment because of the rubbish generated. Ask the local street cleaners in the borough or the residents living opposite or near South Thames (Merton) College who suffer 5 days a week from the fast food litter dropped/chucked by their students on their way to class.

Well, I think I've whinged enough. Honestly, I would love to see a re-vamped Merton and, particularly a re-vamped Morden. I've lived here for 21 years and it saddens me that the place looks and feels so down-at-heel. But I don't see why any developer would want to come to this neighbourhood, and any who did, probably wouldn't be able to offer the kinds of shops/businesses that we so desperately need. Where is all this money going to come from? We're still in a recession and I can't see that Merton Council, TfL or any developer could possibly lay hands on the sums that would be needed to effect these changes. I know it's not right that people use Morden as a transport "hub" that they pass through, and don't spend any money in. But doesn't that fact simply speak for itself?

Good luck in your endeavours! I'll be watching them with interest.

**Elsbeth Clarke, M.B.E.**

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