

MERTON SITES AND POLICIES PLAN (the Plan)

Public Examination

MAIN MATTERS AND ISSUES

1. Duty to Cooperate. Has the Council discharged its duty to cooperate particularly in respect of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople?
2. Relationship to Core Strategy. Relevant policies in the London Borough of Merton Core Planning Strategy (the Core Strategy) require the provision of a minimum of 4,800 houses in the Borough up to 2026 (Policy CS 9), support the provision and improvement of infrastructure (Policy CS 11), encourage the increased provision of the overall number and range of jobs (Policy CS 12), seek to protect and enhance the borough's public and private open space network (Policy CS 13) and seek to ensure that development is designed to respect, reinforce and enhance the local character of the area (Policy CS 14). To what extent does the Plan assist in achieving these aims?
3. Gypsies Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. Paragraph 18.53 of the Core Strategy says additional pitches for Gypsy and Traveller's accommodation will be delivered through the Site Allocations DPD or an Action Area Plan. The Plan does not do this. Is this approach justified? In particular is the assessment of the need for such accommodation, and the judgement that there are no deliverable or developable sites for such accommodation, based on robust evidence?
4. Flood Risk Management. Is Policy DM F1, which indicates that 'more vulnerable development' may be acceptable in functional floodplain, consistent with national policy and guidance as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework and in National Planning Practice Guidance?
5. Affordable Housing. The Council proposes to delete that part of paragraph 2.42 of the justification to Policy DM H3 which sets rent caps on affordable rents. What are the planning reasons for this proposed deletion?
6. Education. The Council proposes to delete paragraph 3.22 of the justification to Policy DM C2 which deals with the situation in which it is deemed necessary and acceptable for a school to have shared use of a nearby open space. What are the planning reasons for this proposed deletion?
7. Site Selection Process. The Council's Call for Sites Consultation (SP4.20) yielded a number of sites which, together with additional sites that emerged, were assessed by the Council. Most of these sites were ultimately allocated in the Plan suitable for various uses but a number of them were excluded.

This prompts two questions.

(1) Are the sites in the Plan suitable for their allocated uses? This applies particularly to the following sites:

Site 37. Wimbledon Greyhound Stadium.

- (a) Is this site a suitable location for an intensification of sporting activity with supporting enabling development?
- (b) Support has variously been expressed for providing an enhanced greyhound stadium or a football stadium on the site. On the face of it the allocation in the Plan would allow for either option. It would not be appropriate at this stage to go into the relative merits of these schemes but it has been suggested that the Plan should include a more explicit reference to seeking to retain a greyhound stadium. Is there any merit in this suggestion?
- (c) Is the site suitable for the sort of enabling development (residential/leisure/retail) that has been suggested?
- (d) It has been suggested that the site is more suitable for industrial and warehouse development together with leisure facilities and school use. What are the advantages and disadvantages of this approach?

Site 35. Mitcham Fire Station.

- (a) Is this site a suitable location for the mix of community, residential restaurant/café, drinking establishment and non-food retail uses for which it is allocated in the Plan?
- (b) It has been suggested that the site would be suitable for a residential led mixed use development. What are the advantages and disadvantages of this suggestion?
- (c) Should this site be considered as part of a wider site?

Site 70 Haslemere Industrial Estate.

- (a) Is this site a suitable location for business/light industrial or other suitable employment led development?
- (b) It has been suggested that the site should be allocated for a mix of employment and residential uses. What would be the advantages and disadvantages of this approach?

Site 48. Land at Bushey Road.

- (a) Is there a realistic prospect of the site being developed for the employment led mix of uses, including bulky goods retail, for which it is allocated in the Plan?

Site 41. Kingston Road Opposite Lower Downs.

- (a) Is the site suitable for the residential use for which it has been allocated in the Plan?
- (b) It has been suggested that the suite should variously be used as a school, as open space or as a

roundabout. What are the merits or otherwise of these proposals.

W007. Land at Rookwood Avenue.

- (a) The existing green corridor designation on this site is proposed to be retained and an open space designation would be added. Would this open up the possibility of the land being developed for, for example, car parking?

(2) Why have certain sites been excluded from the Plan? This applies in particular to:

Site 38. Byegrove Road, Colliers Wood.

- (a) Why was this Sewage Pumping Station excluded from the Plan rather than identified as a Major Developed Site?

Site 16. Wimbledon Library

- (a) This site is allocated in the submitted version of the Plan but the Council now proposes to exclude it. What are the planning reasons for this decision?