12 The Spatial Strategy - summary

Summary of Merton's Core Strategy

12.1 In accordance with the vision, objectives and spatial principles set out in the previous chapter, Merton's spatial strategy is summarised below.

A summary of Merton's Spatial Strategy

Merton's Core Strategy will:

a. Protect and enhance Merton's village neighbourhoods and natural environment.
b. Maintain and improve other town centres at Wimbledon and Colliers Wood, local centres - Arthur Road, North Mitcham, Motspur Park, Raynes Park and Wimbledon Village - and neighbourhood parades and improve the public realm throughout the borough.
c. Recognise the suburban character of Merton when providing a mix of new homes, including family homes.
d. Support local community life through a diversity of local shops, community services, employment opportunities, education, recreational activities and other infrastructure that meet local needs.
e. Bridge the gap between eastern and western areas by regenerating Mitcham and Morden district centres.
f. Promote a diverse and resilient economic base, supporting Wimbledon as the borough's Major Centre.
g. Make the most of Merton's cultural and sporting assets and protect its open spaces.
h. Make Merton an easy place to get around by road, rail, cycling and walking.
i. Reduce the impacts of climate change, flooding, waste disposal, travel congestion, energy costs and utilities infrastructure.
12 The Spatial Strategy - summary

Bridging the gap

12.2 Spatial planning enables local authorities, with their partners, to shape areas by improving the levels of prosperity of their area, tackling the underlying economic causes of decline and building cohesive communities, where people want to live and work and where businesses want to invest. This is inherent in reducing inequalities.

12.3 In line with Merton's Community Plan and Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy, the Core Strategy seeks to bridge the gap and reduce inequalities that exist within the borough. Eastern and southern parts of Merton have a long history of multiple deprivation compared to the relatively more affluent northern and western parts of the borough.

12.4 Although Merton was in the top 20% most prosperous boroughs in London in 2007, national research identified eight smaller neighbourhoods within the borough (known as Super Output Areas) as falling within the 25% most deprived neighbourhoods in England and Wales. These results have been consistent since at least 1991, and reflect local knowledge, including child poverty measures, local wages and unemployment, educational attainment, health levels, and what local people have told us through public consultation.

12.5 To improve the pockets of multiple deprivation, the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy identified eight wards in the east of the borough as a Neighbourhood Renewal Area. These are Lavender Fields, Cricket Green, Figge's Marsh, Ravensbury, Pollards Hill, St Helier, Longthornton and Graveney, as shown in the picture below, "Merton's Neighbourhood Renewal Area" and on the Chapter 10 'Key Diagram'.
The Strategy also suggested that pockets of disadvantage in other wards should be targeted, with identified hotspots in Abbey and Colliers Wood.

Many of the solutions to bridging the gap operate either at a very local level (such as social projects), or go beyond Merton’s boundaries, and are being addressed by working in partnership across the south London sub-region (for example, critical care and health matters).

Town and local centres will be the focus for a range of uses, commercial activity, office-based businesses and high density housing, as set out in Chapter 13 ‘Centres - Policy 1’

Priority within this plan period will be given to the regeneration of Mitcham and Morden, as outlined in Chapter 16 ‘Mitcham sub-area - Policy 3’ and Chapter 17 ‘Morden sub-area - Policy 4’ in order to reduce inequalities and achieve the other aims of this plan.
12.10 For Mitcham town centre, change will focus on improving the local environment, providing business and enterprise support, building on the unique community and cultural assets of the area, improving public transport to the centre and making the area easier to get to and around by foot, car, bike and public transport. Development of sites will take place gradually towards the overall vision set out in the Mitcham SPD.

12.11 More comprehensive redevelopment is proposed for Morden town centre. The strategy is to capitalise on Morden’s existing transport, leisure, cultural, civic and educational assets, introducing a better quality, quantity and mix of commercial, residential and retail uses appropriate to a District Centre. The surrounding residential neighbourhoods will benefit from a thriving, attractive town centre with a greater range of services.

12.12 There are ambitions to develop other areas to support the same aims, for example, within Colliers Wood centre to improve the public realm, provide a range of town centre services to compliment the existing retail offer and reduce congestion. There may also be potential for redeveloping poor quality housing to create better quality new homes for our current and future residents. This plan does not preclude such initiatives; it echos Merton’s Community Plan and Merton Partnership in prioritising the regeneration of Mitcham and Morden to be delivered within the next 15 years.

12.13 To help bridge the gap and to support our residents and workers over the next 15 years, we want to promote economic resilience across the whole borough. This is one of the core objectives of the emerging Economic Development Strategy which complements the LDF.

12.14 The emerging proposals for economic development capitalise on Merton’s outer London location, proximity to airports and the road and rail network, and its attractive surroundings are based around the town centres and the designated employment areas. These include several large business and industrial estates within the Wandle Valley.

12.15 As set out in Chapter 27 ‘Economic development - Policy 16’, designated business and industrial areas will be maintained or redeveloped for employment uses. Business activities that generate a lot of commuter or customer travel, such as convenience shopping, larger offices, restaurants, theatres and other leisure activities will locate in town or local centres, to create attractive, thriving centres and reduce congestion. To complement this approach, large out-of-centre retail and leisure development or expansion will be firmly resisted.

12.16 Despite some attractive surroundings including Merton Abbey Mills and Wandle Park, Colliers Wood has evolved into an out-of-centre retail destination, characterised by large retail sheds, divided by car parks and congested main roads.

12.17 The ambition for Colliers Wood is to create an attractive compact district centre along a street pattern that allows traffic and pedestrian movement. In accordance with Chapter 15 ‘Colliers Wood sub-area - Policy 2’, we will work with the Mayor of London in recognising it as a district centre to help encourage a wider variety of town centre uses to complement its existing
retail offer. Improvements to the public realm will be supported through redevelopment proposals that contribute to an attractive street scene. Working with the Environment Agency and utilities, we will seek to resolve the blight of flooding and utilities infrastructure.

12.18 Wimbledon is our only major centre but is probably one of the best known parts of London; the annual All England Tennis Championships meaning worldwide recognition of the Wimbledon ‘brand’.

12.19 In accordance with chapter 20 ‘Wimbledon sub-area - Policy 7’, Wimbledon will be the focus for initiatives that help improve the public realm, maintain its economic competitiveness and reinforce its role as a high quality leisure, cultural and business destination all year round. These include business improvement campaigns, public protection initiatives and street scene improvements. Creating quality modern business space suitable for larger offices and supporting a range of retail, residential, cultural and visitor attractions within the town centre will also help protect Wimbledon’s surrounding historic environment.

Protecting local character

12.20 As an outer London borough, much of Merton is characterised by suburban tree-lined streets, flanked by homes with gardens and many of the town and local centres have arisen from former village settlements. A key priority of the LDF is to protect and enhance our local character as set out in Chapter 21 ‘Design - Policy 8’.

12.21 In established attractive residential areas, the traditional character, built form and surrounding natural environment will be maintained. New development will be of a high quality sustainable design that meets urban design objectives and enhances our overall design standard.

12.22 Although there are a higher number of Conservation Areas in the western parts of the borough within Wimbledon, West Wimbledon and Wimbledon Village, there is a fairly even distribution of listed buildings and other heritage sites within the borough. We will continue to protect Conservation Areas and listed buildings from inappropriate development.

12.23 In 2003 we led the way in protecting the environment through the planning system; the “Merton Rule” required the use of renewable energy to help power large commercial buildings.

12.24 We are continuing to lead the way in fighting climate change while helping reduce fuel poverty for its residents and businesses. All new buildings will be expected to be of the highest environmental standards viable, reducing energy and resource consumption beyond the minimum requirements. This approach is set out in Chapter 22 ‘Climate change - Policy 9’.

12.25 The local centres of Arthur Road, Motspur Park, North Mitcham, Raynes Park and Wimbledon Village have an important role in meeting local needs. The strategy for these centres will be to protect them as vibrant and attractive local centres with a balance of shopping, jobs, homes and community services appropriate to their function. Improving the public realm will be a priority for all local centres, in combination with public protection and street management initiatives.
12.26 Neighbourhood parades play an important function in improving the sustainability of the borough, providing essential shops and other facilities within walking distance of residential areas. Our strategy will be to support local services and shops within attractive neighbourhood parades, to allow local residents easy access to necessary services without having to travel far.

12.27 One of the valued characteristics of Merton is its open space, which makes up 18% of the borough’s area. Wimbledon and Mitcham Commons are the largest open spaces in the borough.

12.28 We have a long and well known sporting history, not only for tennis but also football near Plough Lane and at Bishopsford Road and cricket on Mitcham Cricket Green. To make the most of our cultural and sporting assets, the Core Strategy will work with partners to protect or improve existing assets and to provide new sporting and recreational facilities.

12.29 Green chains and corridors, including the Wandle Trail, mix leisure with access to nature. The Core Strategy will continue to provide vital walking or cycling routes and wildlife movements. In particular we are working with partners to create the Wandle Valley Regional Park, as set out in Chapter 19 Wandle Valley sub area - policy 6.

12.30 The existing areas of open space will continue to be protected. There has been a significant increase in births over the past 5 years which will put unprecedented pressure on school provision. On this basis some existing open space may be required to accommodate new buildings. This will be considered exceptionally where there is an identified need for an educational establishment that cannot be met in another location or by any other means. This approach is set out in Chapter 25 ‘Open space, nature and recreation - policy 12’.

12.31 In line with the rest of London, Merton’s population is expected to increase; there will be more children of school age and more families in need of homes. Our Core Strategy is to meet the needs of the growing population in mixed, socially inclusive communities. To help achieve this as set out in Chapter 26 ‘Housing - policies 13-15’, a range of types, sizes and tenures of new homes will be built across the borough; these will be well designed to encourage good quality, sustainable neighbourhoods and to enhance local character.

12.32 We will deliver new support services to match planned population growth in areas designated for additional housing, and recognise areas of deficiency. The identified strategic infrastructure priorities over the next 15 years are health provision, education and transport. As set out in Chapter 29 ‘Infrastructure - Policy 20’, we will work with partners in the delivery of these priorities. We are working with the neighbouring boroughs of Croydon, Kingston and Sutton on a Joint Waste Management Program with the aim of encouraging recycling, reducing waste and keeping the borough clean. Chapter 24 ‘Waste management - Policy 11’ sets out this approach, which is being taken forward in a Joint Waste Development Plan Document (DPD), known as the South London Waste Plan.
12.33 Although Merton has good links to central London and the south east, there are parts of the borough that have a greater choice of ways to travel around than others. As detailed in Chapter 28 ‘Transport - policies 17-19’, we will work with our partners towards improving conditions and services for all types of transport modes, especially for those areas that are less accessible by public transport.
13 Centres - Policy 1

Introduction

13.1 Centres play a vital role in supporting sustainable neighbourhoods, at every scale. Merton’s major centre is at Wimbledon, with smaller district centres at Mitcham and Morden, a district centre proposed for Colliers Wood, and a variety of local centres and neighbourhood parades across the borough. However, retailing and offices have faced difficult competition and some centres have declined. There are also areas of out-of-town shopping in the borough which have grown to cater for larger stores and favour access by car.

Strategic Objective

3. To make Merton more prosperous with strong, and diverse long term economic growth.

Merton’s hierarchy of centres is established on the following basis and are represented on the Proposals Map:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LDF Designation</th>
<th>Town Centres in Merton</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Major Centre: providing a range of facilities serving a wide catchment area: shopping especially clothes, electronics and other comparison goods, businesses and employment, arts, culture, leisure and tourism.</td>
<td>● Wimbledon</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| District Centre: providing shopping and services for the local neighbourhoods, mainly for weekly convenience shopping. Hub for local businesses. | ● Mitcham  
● Morden  
● Colliers Wood *(seeking re-designation)* |
| Local Centre: shops and services for day-to-day needs, limited office-based and other small and medium business activities | ● Arthur Road;  
● Motspur Park  
● North Mitcham  
● Raynes Park  
● Wimbledon Village |
| Neighbourhood Parades: convenience shopping and other services, easily accessible to those walking or cycling, or with restricted mobility | ● Various locations around the borough, see Proposals Map |

The Council will support new development in these centres commensurate with their scale and function and where it respects the character and local environment of the area.
A mix of appropriate uses will be encouraged to locate in the centres, including shopping, restaurants, leisure, recreation, entertainment, cultural, offices and other uses which contribute to the vitality and viability of centres, in accordance with the sub-area policies set out in Sub-Areas.

We will seek to maintain Wimbledon’s role as one of London’s Major Centres and give priority to the regeneration of Mitcham and Morden.

The Council will work with the Mayor of London to designate Colliers Wood as a District Centre, encourage a wider range of town centre uses, address flooding issues and improve the public realm.

Outside the centres, planning permission for new retail or leisure development will only be granted if it can be demonstrated that:

a. the sequential approach as advocated by Government guidance has been appropriately applied; and
b. there is not an adverse impact on the vitality and viability of any nearby centre.

**SA/SEA Implications**

Maintaining and improving centres brings largely positive social and economic benefits, improving the environment, levels of provision and employment opportunities, which reduce the need to travel further afield. This should outweigh negative impacts on waste and carbon emissions.

**Justification**

13.2 PPS6 set out the Government’s key objective for town centres, to promote their vitality and viability. To deliver this, development should be focused in existing centres in order to strengthen and, where appropriate, regenerate them.

13.3 PPS6 directs the Core Strategy to set out a spatial vision and strategy for the network and hierarchy of centres, including local centres, within the area, setting out how the role of different centres will contribute to the overall spatial vision for their area.

13.4 Amendments have been proposed to PPS6 (in draft PPS4) to strengthen the Government’s policy on positive planning for town centres. Of most relevance to the Core Strategy is consideration to promoting consumer choice and retail diversity, in particular recognising that smaller shops can significantly enhance the character and vibrancy of a centre and make a valuable contribution to consumer choice.
13.5 Draft PPS4 encourages proactive support for the diversification of uses in town centres as a whole, and ensuring that tourism, leisure and cultural activities which appeal to a wide range of age and social groups are dispersed throughout the centre.

13.6 The London Plan 2008 sets out a positive approach to support and regenerate town centres. It lists the Strategic Town Centre Network in Merton as:

- Major Centre: Wimbledon
- District Centres: Morden and Mitcham

Map 1

13.7 In the more recent London Plan Initial Proposals (2009), the Mayor wants to manage growth within and on the edge of town centres, creating a competitive retail environment so that people have access to the goods and services that they need. It stated that proposals will also be brought forward to secure affordable small shop units in major retail schemes.

13.8 The success of centres in Merton will in part be influenced by the extent to which centres in surrounding boroughs improve. If Merton’s centres improve they could attract some of this spending.

13.9 Conversely, research carried out for the Mayor of London and within Merton illustrates how a centre like Wimbledon loses a significant amount of trade to other distant centres, such as Kingston, Croydon and the West End. It shows how competitive the retail market is in London, and how developments which seem geographically very far away can affect the viability of outlying centres.
13.10 Merton’s Town Centre Study 2005 and the 2008 update identified that there was considerable demand for new facilities in all Merton town centres, including both groceries (convenience) and non food (comparison) shopping.

13.11 However the research informing the Town Centre Study 2008 update was carried out and what we now know to be the peak of the market, and the forecasts for future comparison and convenience shopping were based on the continuation of existing shopping patterns.


13.13 The GLA Comparison Goods report noted that spending on groceries and other convenience goods in Merton would only increase by around 19% over the 20 year period between 2006 and 2026, accounting for demographic change, whereas spending on comparison goods is expected to almost double during the same time period.

Table 2 Annual spending projections in Merton on shopping and leisure to 2026 (GLA report)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2026</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Convenience (groceries, newspapers etc)</td>
<td>£321m</td>
<td>£357m</td>
<td>£396m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparison (clothes, white goods, electronics etc)</td>
<td>£627m</td>
<td>£903m</td>
<td>£1,327m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure</td>
<td>£1,494m</td>
<td>£1,702m</td>
<td>£1,846m</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13.14 Although the Merton Town Centre Capacity Update and the GLA Comparison Goods Report were carried out within four months of each other and were based on the same data sources, they have produced markedly different projections for medium to long-term retail floorspace capacity in Merton.

13.15 Assuming productivity growth of 2.2%, the GLA comparison goods report gives comparison goods floorspace requirements of less than half that projected by the Merton Town Centre Capacity update.

13.16 Each report has allocated the floorspace capacity projections to town centres across the borough as follows:
**Table 3 Floorspace capacity projections for comparison shopping to 2016**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Merton town centre study 2008</th>
<th>GLA Convenience floorspace study 2008-9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wimbledon</td>
<td>6,500m² gross</td>
<td>4,283m² gross</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitcham</td>
<td>1,500m² gross</td>
<td>338m² gross</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morden</td>
<td>2,400m² gross</td>
<td>387m² gross</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colliers Wood</td>
<td>8,500m² gross</td>
<td>1,232m² gross</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local centres,</td>
<td>4,700m² gross</td>
<td>782m² gross</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neighbourhood parades</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>23,600m² gross</td>
<td>7,022m² gross</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13.17 Both sets of projections are based on the continuation of past trends in consumer spending. However, there is uncertainty over the accuracy of data on past trends while it is not clear whether past trends are a good guide to future changes.

13.18 Changes in consumer behaviour, including the rise in Internet shopping, compound the difficulty of translating consumer spending projections into high street retail floorspace with any accuracy.

13.19 Although there are no comparable projections for convenience floorspace in the GLA Comparison Goods report, the Merton Town Centre Capacity Update suggests the following capacity to 2016:

**Table 4 Floorspace capacity projections for convenience shopping to 2016**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Merton town centre study 2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wimbledon</td>
<td>3,100m² gross</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitcham</td>
<td>700m² gross</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morden</td>
<td>500m² gross</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colliers Wood</td>
<td>400m² gross</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Centres,</td>
<td>3,500m² gross</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neighbourhood parades</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>8,200m² gross</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
13.20 These allocations are based on the continuation of previous trends in retail growth. This assumes that larger centres will continue to expand, and smaller centres will remain small, considering only the amount, not the quality of new retail floorspace.

13.21 Such an approach does not take account of the potential capacity or viability of a town centre to accommodate more retail floorspace or the surrounding transport network to support more growth. It ignores strategic considerations such as the need to encourage other town centre services uses in centres which already have a large amount of retail floorspace – such as in Colliers Wood – and to direct retail growth towards areas identified as in need of regeneration, such as Mitcham and Morden.

13.22 While we acknowledge the most recently published borough-wide figures as an estimate of future retail floorspace capacity and will update the Town Centre Capacity Study during the lifetime of this plan, such projections will not be a key determinant of the need for new retail floorspace. We will consider retail developments in line with the overall strategy set out in this plan, and site-specific requirements relating to individual centres and their surrounds.

**Merton's town centres.**

13.23 The following sub area chapters give more detailed development priorities for each centre. These build upon the priority favoured in the Preferred Options to regenerate Mitcham and Morden, including increased range and quality of services and facilities provided.

13.24 For Wimbledon, the priority is to maintain its current vitality and viability as one of London's major town centres, improving the transport interchange, with more office jobs and quality shops, balanced with community, leisure, arts, culture and associated facilities.

13.25 Our aspiration for Colliers Wood is to bring the centre into the retail hierarchy, recognising it as a District Centre. This will support its development from an out-of-centre retail park to a coherent, attractive town centre with a broader range of uses, as set out in Chapter 15 'Colliers Wood sub-area - Policy 2'. We will use data from Town Centre Health Checks to request that this new designation is recognised in the review of the London Plan.

13.26 Its designation as a District Centre would support a greater range of uses – including banks, building societies, restaurants and cafés – and the provision of smaller units to complement the existing large retail offer.

13.27 The 2008 Town Centres Study, and 2009 Town Centre Health Checks shows that shops in Colliers Wood are of the scale usually found at a District Centre (on a par with Mitcham and Morden) even approaching the scale of a Major Centre. The 2008 Town Centre Study Update shows that the existing grocery (convenience) net sales floorspace is 8,410 sq m and the non-food (comparison) gross floorspace is 30,364 sq m.

13.28 The London Plan recognises the harmful legacy of out of centre retail and other service provision and proposals, which are heavily car dependent. They should be managed in ways that reduce this dependency and improve public transport access. In some circumstances,
there may be potential for a wider mix of uses and greater integration with existing centres. In others, it may mean restricting further retail and town centre activities in the area to support nearby existing centres.
Table 5 Summary of town centre aims

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business and employment</th>
<th>Wimbledon town centre</th>
<th>Colliers Wood, Mitcham, Morden District Centres</th>
<th>Local Centres, Arthur Road, Motspur Park, North Mitcham, Raynes Park, Wimbledon Village</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business and employment</td>
<td>Support major high quality offices</td>
<td>Improve the quality of office development appropriate to District Centre scale</td>
<td>Maintain business premises appropriate to local centre scale, especially small and medium offices and other business activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>Strengthening range and quality of shopping to serve a wider catchment area, especially for comparison goods. Support a mix of unit sizes, including smaller units</td>
<td>Colliers Wood Support a mix of unit sizes, particularly smaller units, to facilitate a greater range of town centre uses. <strong>Mitcham and Morden</strong> Improve the quality and quantity of shopping for surrounding neighbourhoods, including weekly convenience shopping</td>
<td>Shops and services providing for day-to-day needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>Some residential development where densities are commensurate with good public transport access</td>
<td>Colliers Wood Some housing potential while having regard to environmental factors, particularly flood risk <strong>Mitcham</strong> New housing commensurate with the regeneration aims for the town centre <strong>Morden</strong></td>
<td>Limited residential development appropriate to Local Centre scale, respecting or enhancing local character.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## 13 Centres - Policy 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local Centres, Arthur Road, Motspur Park, North Mitcham, Raynes Park, Wimbledon Village</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Colliers Wood, Mitcham, Morden District Centres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wimbledon town centre</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Design</strong></th>
<th>Colliers Wood</th>
<th>Mitcham</th>
<th>Morden</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Support high quality design and public realm improvements. Consider tall buildings where they are compatible with existing streetscape and wider context.</td>
<td>Requiring development to help focus the town centre and create coherent spaces of high quality design. Reduce flood risk through viable, attractive mitigation measures. Consider tall buildings where they are compatible with existing setting and wider context.</td>
<td>Support high quality design and public realm improvements, recognising the centre’s village origins where appropriate.</td>
<td>Support high quality design and public realm improvements. Consider tall buildings where they are compatible with the existing setting and wider context.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Local Centres, Arthur Road, Motspur Park, North Mitcham, Raynes Park, Wimbledon Village</strong></td>
<td><strong>Colliers Wood, Mitcham, Morden District Centres</strong></td>
<td><strong>Wimbledon town centre</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Arts, culture and the evening economy</strong></td>
<td>Support provision of community and cultural facilities, especially around the existing hub at the eastern end of the Broadway. Promote a balanced, safe, attractive evening economy through a mix of uses.</td>
<td>Encourage provision appropriate to the role and function of the centre.</td>
<td>Encourage facilities where they serve surrounding neighbourhoods and don't interfere with residential amenity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tourism and visitors</strong></td>
<td>Encourage developments that attract visitors to the area all year round, including high quality hotels, conference centres and cultural activities</td>
<td>Develop suitable tourist attractions and accommodation in accessible locations where they complement or enhance local character.</td>
<td>Small scale provision may be appropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transport and public realm</strong></td>
<td>To improve the quality of the interchange around Wimbledon Station. To develop a public realm that attracts pedestrians to the area while ensuring the smooth flow of traffic.</td>
<td>Colliers Wood Improve the public realm to make the town centre more focused and easier to get around, especially for pedestrians. Mitcham To redesign the road network to address the over-congestion and fragmentation of the area.</td>
<td>To support a range of modes of transport that complement local character. Improving the public realm to address divisions in communities created by the transport networks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 13 Centres - Policy 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wimbledon town centre</th>
<th>Colliers Wood, Mitcham, Morden District Centres</th>
<th>Local Centres, Arthur Road, Motspur Park, North Mitcham, Raynes Park, Wimbledon Village</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To make the town centre easier to get around for pedestrians and traffic and to maximise the value of public transport to the area.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Morden</strong></td>
<td>To reconfigure the road network to enable the reconnection of the town centre, together with investment in the tube and bus networks.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**13.29** Many of the centres in the borough form a focal point for business activity. The promotion of a wide range of uses can help to secure vitality and viability, and the office sector is important in centres across the borough, particularly Wimbledon. It should be recognised that Wimbledon's economic hinterland stretches beyond the confines of the town centre, as far as Colliers Wood.

**13.30** In accordance with Policy Policy 16 ‘Economic Development’, economic diversity will be supported where it complements the role of the centre. Capacity for large high quality offices will be supported in Wimbledon, and to a lesser extent Morden, where there is good access to public transport and service infrastructure for employees and clients to make such development viable and attractive. Capacity for small and medium sized offices will be created where there is good access to public transport, banks, cafés and services as found in most town and local centres.

**13.31** Housing capacity has been identified in the regeneration proposals for Mitcham and Morden Town Centres, and exists to a more limited extent in Wimbledon and Colliers Wood (subject to flood mitigation). As Wimbledon town centre is tightly surrounded by attractive terraced housing, which constrains the expansion of the commercial centre in most directions, priority in Wimbledon town centre should be given to commercial considerations over residential where there is competition between the two.
13.32 Improvements to the public realm have been identified for a number of places and will be encouraged in all centres, including to address the domination and division by traffic or railways and to enable safer communities. As outlined in Chapter 28 ‘Transport - policies 17-19’ measures will ensure congestion is minimised while adequate parking and servicing is available.

13.33 Research focused on Merton’s town centres looked at the quality and range of shops and activities, as well as the views of local people. This found that:

- food shopping was most lacking in Mitcham and Morden despite their large residential hinterland, and that demand is expected in these centres that could form the basis for their regeneration. The quality and range of activities in both of these centres was thought to be too limited, discouraging people from going to these centres.
- most demand for non-food shops is likely in Wimbledon and this will maintain this centre's role as a Major Centre. Respondents were concerned about expansion of Wimbledon town centre, in particular regarding pubs and bars and the impact that any expansion could have on local shops and surrounding residential areas.
- Colliers Wood will benefit from a wider range of town centre activities, such as banks and building societies, estate agents, cafés, restaurants and leisure uses to complement the existing large retail offer and improve the public realm.

13.34 Previous consultations raised some concerns over the lack of retail variety in the town centres, such as the predominance of charity shops in Morden and Mitcham. However there were mixed views on the status of Wimbledon as a “clone town” with many high street chains, as many recognised this as a measure of attractiveness of the centre.

13.35 Centres in the borough are also a focus for leisure activities and an evening economy. The Mayor of London’s Best Practice Guidance on Managing the Night Time Economy included a comparison of the amount of leisure floorspace in town centres, highlighting the most significant amount of floorspace in the borough in Wimbledon, Wimbledon Village and Morden.

13.36 A co-ordinated approach to public protection through development control, crime, licencing and environmental health will help manage the evening economy, which includes restaurants, cafés, pubs, bars, takeaways, cinemas, theatres and nightclubs. This will avoid potential harm to nearby residents or businesses while supporting vibrant centres with a mix of different attractions.
Local centres

13.37  Local centres at Arthur Road, Motspur Park, North Mitcham, Raynes Park and Wimbledon Village, and neighbourhood shopping parades, will continue to function as attractive, thriving and accessible to local residents and workers to help meet day to day needs.

13.38  Local centres should serve small catchment areas, focused on serving local communities. Development within these centres should be commensurate with this role and limited catchment area. It is recognised that small scale infill development is likely to be appropriate within Local Centres, where it provides local services and enhances the area’s character.

13.39  Previous consultations have also indicated support for limited scale of investment in Local Centres to improve facilities but to retain their character:

13.40  Arthur Road, Motspur Park and North Mitcham are three linear local centres, each well served by either mainline rail (Motspur Park, North Mitcham) or underground (Arthur Road) which improves footfall through these stations from commuters. All provide a reasonable range
of shops and services, and generally have low vacancy rates. The busy roads bisecting each
centre can hinder pedestrian movement. As with all local centres and neighbourhood parades,
implementing the Public Realm Strategy will be the main support for the each area.

13.41 Wimbledon Village is a long linear local centre, not served by rail but close to Wimbledon
Town Centre’s rail stations. It is a unique and attractive environment, with high quality physical
fabric and landscaping. Unlike other local centres, it has few grocery stores but several designer
clothing and footwear retailers and a mix of independent and chain restaurants and cafés. The
approach for Wimbledon Village is to protect or enhance the public realm by continuing the strict
controls on development through the conservation area designations, and take a co-ordinated
approach to public protection involving licencing and environmental health to maintain this high
quality and vibrant local centre.

13.42 Raynes Park is a relatively small local centre surrounding a national rail station with
regular trains to central London and the south east, Woking, Basingstoke, Southampton. It is
surrounded by a large, relatively dense residential hinterland. The centre’s very good accessibility
to public transport means it faces unique development pressures. The approach for this centre
is outlined in Chapter 18 ‘Raynes Park sub-area - Policy 5’

13.43 Changes to Local Centres within the hierarchy can be determined locally. Although the
2005 Town Centre Capacity Study recognised that the neighbourhood parades around South
Wimbledon Station could operate at a local centre, there has been significant growth in floorspace
within nearby Colliers Wood since then. A review of South Wimbledon as a local centre will be
subject to longer term changes at Colliers Wood.

13.44 Extending the network of Local Centres may assist in encouraging a diverse range of
uses at a focal point to serve sustainable communities. It is expected that further opportunities
to designate Local Centres may occur during the lifetime of the Core Strategy, depending on
local population growth or changes and the viability of shops and services.

13.45 Alternative options to prioritise accessible areas for regeneration or growth towards the
South Wimbledon/Colliers Wood Area for Intensification were not taken forward, as the Core
Strategy is driven by a more encompassing approach to regenerate where it is needed. This
fits well with the focus on all town and local centres in the hierarchy, maintaining and improving
their role.

13.46 Major out-of-centre development will therefore be resisted, which would undermine the
vitality and viability of centres. PPS6 sets out the sequential approach to site selection for new
retail development, namely that first preference should be existing centres where suitable sites
or buildings for conversion are, or are likely to become available, taking account of an appropriate
scale of development in relation to the role and function of the centre.

13.47 This is followed by edge-of-centre locations, with preference given to sites that are or
will be well-connected to the centre and only then out-of-centre sites, with preference given to
sites which are or will be well served by a choice of means of transport and which are close to
the centre and have a high likelihood of forming links with the centre.
13.48 The London Plan supports town centre development, as more sustainable than out of centre locations which generate significant traffic volumes but tend to be less accessible for many people, particularly those without access to private transport. Major trip-generating retail and leisure developments will therefore be directed towards centres in the borough in accordance with the hierarchy.

**Key drivers**

- Mayor of London Managing the Night Time Economy Best Practice Guidance 2007
- Town Centre Study (2005 and 2008 Update)

**Delivery and Monitoring**

13.49 Policies in the Development Control Policies DPD will support Merton’s centres hierarchy, along with supporting Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD’s). A review of the A3 (Food and Drink) Use Supplementary Planning Guidance (1999) may be required.

13.50 The evidence base will need to be regularly revisited and the longer term growth projections between 2016 and 2021 will be monitored and updated as necessary. More detailed indicators and targets for particular centres where significant change is anticipated are set out in Chapter 14 ‘Sub-Areas’

13.51 Merton has an established town centre management service and jointly funds managers in Wimbledon, Morden and Mitcham. There are established Town Centre Partnerships (including the police, transport providers, local businesses) in all the main town centres and the council will support their work to improve these centres. Town centre regeneration also forms part of a wider regeneration strategy to target key areas of change within the borough, which will ensure a joined up approach to areas such as crime reduction and licencing. Contributions will be sought towards measures to improve centres where required from new development, in accordance with Chapter Policy 20 ‘Infrastructure’ This partnership approach will apply to investing in improvements to town and local centres and neighbourhood parades.
Table 6 Centres Strategic Objective

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Objective</th>
<th>Indicator(s)</th>
<th>Target(s)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To make Merton more prosperous with strong, and diverse long term economic growth.</td>
<td>Amount of completed retail, office and leisure development.</td>
<td>More than 50% of A1 and A2 uses to be sited in Major or District Town Centres of Wimbledon, Mitcham or Morden. Remaining developments (to make a total of 100%) should be located in Local Centres or Neighbourhood Parades.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage of retail office and leisure development found in town centres (COI)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small shops</td>
<td>No loss of small shops in Core Shopping Area/Creation of additional small retail units.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
14 Sub-Areas

14.1 In 2008 the Government published Transforming Places; Changing Lives – A Framework for Regeneration, a consultation document on a new economic people focused approach to regeneration. It notes that every area is different and will require a response that fits local circumstances, which is why proposals include that decisions on how and where to invest are made locally and regionally.

14.2 The Core Strategy Preferred Options referred to a number of areas in the borough and set out priorities for regeneration. There was broad support for the preferred spatial option to target regeneration in key areas and tackle imbalances between different parts of Merton. As identified in Chapter 13 ‘Centres - Policy 1’ and the sub area policies, many of these priorities were already established in Merton’s Community Plan and the Council’s Business Plan.

14.3 Further research has now led to the opportunity to articulate more clearly how different areas in the borough will change over time. Each of these areas requires a coordinated or comprehensive approach to guide improvements or maintain already valued local assets to create or maintain sustainable neighbourhoods, directing regeneration or enhancement, as set out in the following sub-area policies. Each area has been considered from an analysis of social and physical characteristics, to create a vision focused on the area and objectives that can be further developed within the LDF.

14.4 While the Core Strategy sets out the overarching vision and objectives for each sub-area, it will be for other plans to set out the detailed guidance to take these forward, which in turn will need to be accompanied by their own delivery and monitoring framework. Vital to delivering the sub-area policies is partnership working, both across the council and with external partnerships.

14.5 Detail on the sustainability appraisal for the sub area policies (Core Strategy Policies 1-7) can be found in Merton’s Core Strategy Sustainability Appraisal Refresh 2009 report.
Map 1 Colliers Wood sub area
15 Colliers Wood sub-area - Policy 2

Analysis

15.1 The Mayor of London recognised that the Colliers Wood/South Wimbledon area as particularly important within the Wandle Valley, designating it as an Area for Intensification in the 2004 London Plan. The South London Sub Regional Development Framework 2005 identified an indicative working boundary which extended north including Plough Lane. The London Plan identified the theoretical minimum capacity of the area, comprising 120 ha, as 2,000 indicative employment capacity and 1,300 homes to 2016.

15.2 Colliers Wood local centre is spread between Colliers Wood High Street to the north, almost reaching South Wimbledon tube station to the south. The Colliers Wood area has good road links, with a number of bus stops along the High Street, and a tube station. Colliers Wood centre has several assets, including the Wandle Park, good transport links to the centre (though not around it) and the heritage and market at Merton Abbey Mills, at the start of the Wandle Trail.

15.3 However, although Colliers Wood centre is easy to get to by road and public transport, it is difficult to get around. Much of the area is dominated by large out-of-centre car-based retail developments with poor pedestrian links between the High Street and the retail parks; the busy roads are also a barrier to pedestrian movement and suffer from traffic congestion.

15.4 The retail floorspace within Colliers Wood centre, at over 8,000 sq metres net for groceries and other convenience goods and over 30,000 sq metres gross for non-food goods, is on a par with a major centre like Wimbledon. However, covering a large area, the shops and services do not provide a single shopping destination, weakened by significant breaks in shop frontages and poor pedestrian links. The retail offer is not complemented by other town centre uses such as banks, building societies and other professional services, restaurants and community uses.

15.5 The quality of the streetscape in the High Street is reasonable, but landscaping is poor. A small part is within a Conservation Area at Abbey Mills and the Wandle Park, but overall the urban design of Colliers Wood High Street has little character with uneven building lines and rooftopscape. Some of the uses, like the bus depot, are not town centre uses, lack visual amenity and disrupt the frontages. The electricity pylons crossing the area are another visual eyesore.

15.6 Densities are not particularly high, given the reasonable level of public transport accessibility, except for the negative image of the Brown and Root Tower. Planning permission has been granted for the mixed-use development of the Tower, to provide a library facility, GP surgery, neighbourhood police office, retail accommodation, office space, and residential units.

15.7 To the southwest is Merton Abbey Mills. The complex includes a craft and retail market, studios, shops, restaurants, a theatre, offices and a public house, covered by a Conservation Area, within which are a number of listed buildings.
15.8 Adjacent is the site of great historical significance, Merton Priory, founded as an Augustinian priory in the twelfth Century. It is designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument where excavated remains can be viewed. Since 1999 it has been included on the National Heritage at Risk Register due to slow decay, although improvement plans have been identified.

15.9 The area has seen some major development since 2000, including a hotel, health and fitness club, restaurants and riverside apartments at Merton Abbey Mills and an extension to the Tandem Centre to provide retail, offices, restaurants and residential. Utilities infrastructure also dominates Colliers Wood. Consultees are concerned about the electricity pylons that stand out on the skyline through the area. Thames Water Ring Main servicing area occupies a large site to the back of the Tandem Centre.

15.10 To the west is South Wimbledon, a mostly linear commercial area. Current commercial uses do not seem to serve the local nor the wider catchment area that the area has the potential to serve.

15.11 Despite an almost continuous commercial presence alongside the east-west axis, a broad shopping experience beyond convenience shopping is not on offer and there is little focus to the area. The general quality of the environment and buildings is poor, lacking a sense of space. Traffic congestion dominates, primarily due to the constrained junction at the tube station. The higher footfall attracted by South Wimbledon tube station has not lead to an improved retail offer around the station, and thus the area has a distinct lack of identity.

15.12 The residential areas east and west of High Street Colliers Wood, bordering Wandsworth, are made up of fairly dense early 20th century grid iron terraced homes with gardens. However, there are some post war housing estates of varying quality and limited amenity for their residents. Some pockets of Colliers Wood and South Wimbledon have long standing issues of multiple deprivation and socio-economic exclusion.

15.13 South Wimbledon Business Area (also known as Morden Industrial Area) lies to the south of Merantun Way. It is a largely self-contained industrial area whose location along the road network and the range of modern units it offers has meant that it has been well occupied and commanded some of the highest rents in south London for a number of years. It contains a variety of businesses, from creative industries to food production, logistics, warehousing and heavy industrial processes. A smaller, less modern designated industrial area lies adjacent to Western Road.

15.14 The river Wandle runs through Colliers Wood centre and a considerable part of the centre, including parts of High Street Colliers Wood and the Brown and Root tower lie within the functional floodplain. Access to the Thames Water Ring Main lies to the north of the Tandem Centre.

**Strategic Objective**

15.15 Strategic Objective 3: To make Merton more prosperous with strong and diverse long term economic growth.
To create a thriving and attractive District Centre at Colliers Wood, we will do this by:

a. Working with the GLA to recognise Colliers Wood as a District Centre in the London Plan hierarchy.

b. Supporting development, especially financial and business services, restaurants, cafés and community facilities, to improve the range of town centre uses within Colliers Wood centre commensurate with its retail offer as a District Centre. This will be done primarily through the provision of smaller units.

c. Requiring development to help create coherent spaces of high quality design, reconfiguring the centre to create a focus and making the environment more attractive to town centre users, especially pedestrians;

d. Working with the Environment Agency and the GLA to reduce flood risk and to explore viable and appropriate flood mitigation measures complementary with improving the public realm and creating a thriving viable centre.

Surrounding area of Colliers Wood

e. Working with the Environment Agency to reduce flood risk and to explore viable and appropriate flood mitigation measures complementary with improving the public realm and creating a thriving town centre;

f. Supporting development which helps to improve the quality of local housing, especially in the South Wimbledon area.

g. Supporting improvements to the transport infrastructure that will help to reduce road congestion and improve the public realm.

Justification

15.16 Despite many constraints, what is clear from research and consultation results is that in Colliers Wood the opportunity exists for quite significant transformational change away from an out-of-centre retail park. There is a need to take forward a coordinated approach to develop Colliers Wood as a District Centre, to guide major sites and development opportunities to provide a more coherent, attractive centre which is easier to get around.

15.17 If it becomes designated as a District Centre in the review of the London Plan, it will then allow for a wider range of uses appropriate to its scale and function in addition to the large retail offer, including banks, cafés and cultural facilities. It would also help facilitate transport improvements - particularly reducing road congestion and improving pedestrian links around the centre - which are vital to improving the public realm.
15.18 Research and consultation results show that Colliers Wood centre does not provide a single shopping experience due to the 1.4 km length of the centre, significant breaks in the shop frontages and poor pedestrian links. However it functions as a District Centre in retail terms, with over 100 different retail units, and an existing retail sales floorspace of over 30,000 sq metres net, much of it made up of large retail sheds.

15.19 Supporting evidence (Town Centre Capacity Study 2005, update 2008, Heart of Merton study 2008) all recognises that there are opportunities from the regeneration of Colliers Wood towards forming a more compact centre with a greater range of town centre services, an improved streetscape and better pedestrian links between shops, transport nodes and other services.

15.20 In the period 2001-2008 approximately 1,360 net new homes were built, exceeding the original London Plan target of 1300 new homes. For employment, subsequent research questions whether the London Plan target of 2000 new jobs by 2016 is deliverable within the time frame, given environmental and economic constraints.

15.21 Currently, Colliers Wood and its surrounds are not considered attractive to the office market; this is born out by research (Heart of Merton 2008, London Office Market 2007) and the fact that the few larger offices found in the area are generally vacant for a long time.

15.22 Creating an attractive, permeable environment in central Colliers Wood with a better street layout, a greater mix of units and a wider range of non-retail uses may make it a more desirable destination for office based businesses, thus increasing the employment potential of the centre.

15.23 However, environmental factors, particularly the risk of flooding, as identified in the Preferred Options Sustainability Appraisal and the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, will need to be mitigated against before Colliers Wood can deliver its full potential.

15.24 Flood mitigation measures and any other environmental considerations will have to be economically viable and in line with the overall aim of creating a thriving and attractive town centre, if they are to benefit the area.
15 Colliers Wood sub-area - Policy 2

Map 2 Colliers Wood Flood Plain
15.25 The Strategic Industrial Location to the north at Plough Lane is relatively isolated from surrounding uses by road, rail, the river Wandle and utilities infrastructure, which makes it appropriate for maintaining its current industrial uses, including waste transfer and processing. This approach is supported in the London Plan.

15.26 Parts of the surrounding area along the border with Wandsworth, including the Wimbledon Greyhound Stadium, lie within the functional floodplain. Further site specific work will be needed to reconcile how specific development proposals within these areas can overcome flooding constraints, in accordance with Environment Agency direction and Chapter 23 ‘Flood management - Policy 10’.

15.27 Like Colliers Wood, the area immediately around South Wimbledon suffers from congestion despite being easily accessible by public transport, and has a limited range of services, including shops and homes. South Wimbledon has the potential to provide a wider range of functions, based on a more diverse population with a wider range of incomes being attracted to live in the area.

15.28 Consultation respondents have highlighted that good quality private and intermediate housing will encourage young professionals into parts of South Wimbledon. This would bring money to the area to support local businesses, create more local employment and attract new businesses into the area, thus improving access to services for existing communities.

15.29 Despite its good access by public transport, South Wimbledon is expected to remain a largely residential neighbourhood. The offer at South Wimbledon will be restricted to serve the immediate local population - convenience shopping, some health and community functions - rather than creating capacity for town centre type services which may compete with the surrounding centres at Morden, Colliers Wood and Wimbledon.

15.30 Development will be supported at South Wimbledon where this helps create a coherent and attractive streetscape, improves the quality of residential development and mix of tenure types available. Public realm improvements which rejuvenate existing tired retail parades will be supported.

15.31 South Wimbledon Business Area (also known as Morden Industrial Area) to the south forms part of Merton’s Strategic Industrial Locations and is one of Merton’s most popular and best occupied estates for businesses.

15.32 In accordance with the London Plan and Chapter 27 ‘Economic development - Policy 16’ developments will be supported that retain or improve the area for employment purposes, especially those catering for modern business accommodation suitable to the creative industries or SMEs. Development that could locate in town centres such as retail or offices that are not ancillary to other development will be resisted, in order to maintain the area for industrial uses.
15 Colliers Wood sub-area - Policy 2

Key drivers

- The London Plan; Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London (Feb 2008)
- Merton Town Centre Capacity Study (2005 and 2008 Update)
- Heart of Merton Study (2008)
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2008)

Delivery and Monitoring

Realistically, within the lifetime of this Core Strategy, the scale of change at Colliers Wood is likely to focus on improving the viability of major restructuring of Colliers Wood centre.

This includes the designation of Colliers Wood as a District Centre in the review of the London Plan, working with the Environment Agency, landowners and developers for greater clarity and a viable, attractive resolution to flood mitigation measures, and working with transport providers, utility companies and others towards general improvements to pedestrian access and the public realm.

Strategic infrastructure needs that have already been identified for delivery in Colliers Wood are set out in Section 30 ‘Infrastructure projects’ However further work will be necessary to set out the longer term framework for significant changes and provide a comprehensive approach to guide future proposals, particularly for Colliers Wood where the potential for change is greatest. The opportunities identified in Colliers Wood and the surrounding area would benefit from more detailed masterplanning and testing before that potential can be realised. Partnership working will be necessary given the complexities of regeneration, including with Wandsworth Council.

Table 1 Colliers Wood Sub Area Strategic Objective

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Objective</th>
<th>Indicator(s)</th>
<th>Target(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To make Merton more prosperous with strong and diverse long term economic growth.</td>
<td>District Centres Hierarchy. Amount of completed retail, office, leisure, community and residential development.</td>
<td>Change in centres hierarchy by 2011.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic Objective</td>
<td>Indicator(s)</td>
<td>Target(s)</td>
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<td>---------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Amount of completed retail, office, leisure, community and residential development.</td>
<td>Additional retail, office, leisure, community and residential development post 2011.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Creation of small retail units.</td>
<td>Additional small retail units</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
16 Mitcham sub-area - Policy 3
Analysis

16.1 Mitcham is the smallest of the three main town centres in Merton, having grown from a historic village predating the 14th century. Elements of the town’s village character remain today, most notably the Fair Green and the Cricket Green. A vibrant market exists in the core of the town centre. Mitcham also home to a number of ethnic concentrations who bring energy and entrepreneurial flair to the community as well as a variety of specialist cultural shops and services which collectively enrich the distinct cultural identity of Mitcham.

16.2 Mitcham District Centre has a small number of multiple retailers and primarily serves the retail needs of residents within the east of the borough. However, it has been in gradual decline for many years. The number of vacant shops has increased and the quality and quantity of retail has reduced. There is a sense that Mitcham town centre has received much less private investment than other areas of the borough over the past three decades.

16.3 A new station, Mitcham Eastfields, opened in June 2008. On the same line as Mitcham Junction but only 800m from the town centre, it has improved access to central London, Surrey and to the south coast. It was the result of successful partnership working between the Council, Network Rail, Southern, First Capital Connect and TfL. Tooting railway station serves North Mitcham local centre.

16.4 To the south of the town centre there is a tram service that links to Wimbledon Town Centre and neighbouring borough of Croydon, however the tram service do not directly serve Mitcham Town Centre. The areas east of the town centre rely on access by road and have a more limited range of transport opportunities.

16.5 The character of the District Centre is defined by its street pattern, the Fair Green and a range of buildings adhering to the traditional village grain and buildings of architectural merit. A small area of the centre is designated as a Conservation Area, however this does not coincide with the core retail area.

16.6 The central pedestrianised area provides a good focus for the shopping area reinforced by the green space in front. Surrounding the centre, there are a mix of building styles with many premises unsuitable for modern businesses. Outside of the pedestrianised area, the centre is dominated and divided by roads and traffic. To the south, the Cricket Green and Mitcham Common offer some exceptional environmental and recreational assets.

16.7 There are areas of multiple deprivation and socio-economic exclusion around Mitcham Town Centre with some persistent pockets, and the area has been recognised as a priority for regeneration for some time. A high proportion of Merton’s social housing stock is located in Mitcham.

16.8 North Mitcham is a reasonably large Local Centre, about 1km north of Mitcham town centre. The linear centre has a good range and choice of shops and services one would typically find within local centre, including two reasonably large supermarkets. The railway line and busy
road dissect the centre, but it is well served by bus services and Tooting Station. Residents feel that the centre requires more business and community services and development that improves the area.

**Strategic Objective**

1. To promote social cohesion and tackle deprivation by reducing inequalities.

**Policy 3**

**Mitcham Town Centre**

To improve the overall environment of Mitcham town centre by providing quality shopping, housing, community facilities and good transport links.

We will do this by:

a. Improving the mix and types of homes including supporting increased provision of intermediate, family and private sector housing;

b. Creating a viable town centre through improving the quality and quantity of commercial, retail, residential and community uses;

c. Recognising and enhancing the distinct cultural identity of the area, encourage businesses, specialist leisure, cultural and retail outlets that contribute to this;

d. Supporting businesses and enterprise;

e. Enhancing the public realm through high quality urban design and architecture, improvements to shopfronts and public spaces;

f. Improving access to and around the town centre including supporting the replacement of the existing gyratory system with a 'two way' system;

g. Ensuring measures contribute to the proposed Mitcham Low-Carbon Zone, with major development contributing to low and zero carbon design and technologies.

**Surrounding area of Mitcham Town Centre**

To improve the overall environment of Mitcham surrounding areas by providing quality shopping, housing, community facilities and good transport links.

The council will do this by:

h. Improving the mix and types of homes including supporting increased provision of intermediate, family and private sector housing;

i. Ensuring that development protects or enhances the built and natural heritage, for example around Cricket Green and Mitcham Common;

j. Enhancing the public realm through high quality urban design and architecture, and permitting development that makes a positive visual impact to the overall surroundings;
k. Building upon the increased public transport provision created by Mitcham Eastfields by improving access to an around Mitcham for all modes of transport including connecting Pollards Hill to key transport nodes;
l. Ensuring measures contribute to the proposed Mitcham Low-Carbon Zone, with major development contributing to low and zero carbon design and technologies.

Justification

16.9 The Council and other agencies have long considered eastern parts of the borough, including Mitcham as a focus for investment and regeneration in order to counter multiple deprivation and socio-economic exclusion that are found there.

16.10 Merton’s Community Plan and Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy recognises the inequalities between Mitcham and eastern parts of the borough when compared with western parts. The area is ethnically and culturally diverse and has a high concentration of affordable housing. Although regeneration has been planned for some time, there is little demand for commercial businesses or employment space within the town centre, with high retail yields reflecting low investor confidence and weak performance of retail in the centre.

16.11 Local people do not think that the quality of the local retail offer is able to adequately serve local needs. Respondents to the Core Strategy Preferred Options consultation are concerned about the concentration of affordable housing, suggesting more private and family housing is needed. At the same time businesses are concerned about the lower spending power of local residents and there is a clearly a mismatch in the supply and demand for business and community services. The Preferred Options Sustainability Appraisal recognised the intense development from the regeneration focus in Mitcham town centre, acknowledging improvements such as retail provision will increase access for all.

16.12 Merton’s 2009 Housing Market Assessment Study has identified significant need for affordable housing, particularly social rented housing. However Mitcham is already characterised by a high concentration of existing social housing and would therefore particularly benefit from the provision of more intermediate and private sector housing stock to create a more balanced community and contribute towards reducing inequalities between the eastern and western parts of the borough.

16.13 The adoption of the Mitcham Town Centre SPD in 2006 was intended to provide a framework for taking forward the regeneration strategy. However, since then issues of viability concerning comprehensive redevelopment have been raised by developers and in research. The Council has been considering the best way to move forward, and remain open to considering proposals for a comprehensive redevelopment of the town centre. However it is also interested to consider proposals for individual sites and incremental development which may represent a more viable approach to achieving the vision set out in the SPD, alongside a programme of
complimentary initiatives contributing to the regeneration and enhancement of the Town Centre to increase its attractiveness as a place to shop and do business. The vision has been taken from the SPD as it remains current in setting the overall aim for regeneration.

16.14 The focus on major regeneration in Mitcham is to increase the range and quality of services and facilities provided, including through new housing. Good quality private and intermediate housing could encourage young professionals into Mitcham bringing increased spending power. Improvements to shopping, business offer and community services will reduce the need for surrounding residents to travel further afield.

16.15 The SPD suggests that Mitcham Town Centre could accommodate high density development, possibly taller buildings, in order to create existing and vibrant urban character and sustainable mixed-use development which increases potential for mixed-use and makes efficient use of land and services. However the demand for high density/tall buildings in Mitcham Town Centre has to be balanced with the requirement to respond to its largely small scale historic setting. This is particularly important in respecting and reinforcing local distinctiveness. Therefore tall buildings will only be considered where they can be adequately justified in a townscape analysis as part of a design and access statement, taking into account the Mitcham Town Centre SPD.

16.16 More people using the town centre will have knock-on social and environmental effects, including greater support for existing local businesses, allowing them to expand and create new jobs. It will also make the centre more attractive to new businesses, providing a wider range of services to local residents and workers. Community, cultural and transport services will become more viable and regeneration and redevelopment will offer a chance to improve the public realm, building on its village uniqueness, as set out in the Public Realm Strategy.

16.17 One of the regeneration priorities is to improve transport links to and around Mitcham, as set out in Chapter 28 ‘Transport - policies 17-19’. The successful implementation of Eastfields Station is a step in the right direction and further improvements around the station are intended to increase usage and become a selling point for potential developers. The Council will continue to work with TfL Trams and neighbouring boroughs to develop the Sutton - Mitcham - Tooting extension to the tram. They will prepare to compliment this extension with good interchange facilities for pedestrian, cycle and other public transport.

16.18 Another important priority is improving the urban fabric and public realm, and the opportunity to enhance linkages with Cricket Green and the Common, which will form part of the proposed Regional Park. The Council is keen to continue working with Mitcham Common Conservators.

16.19 Mitcham was one of the pilot projects designated by the Mayor as an Energy Action Area, now being taken forward as one of the low carbon zones across London. This aims to provide locally produced, less polluting and less wasteful energy to fuel households and businesses. This may offer opportunities to take forward exemplar sustainable development in Mitcham, as set out in Chapter 22 ‘Climate change - Policy 9’. Regeneration plans in the town centre and outlying sites are an excellent opportunity to implement District Heat and Power
networks, and all major development would be strongly encouraged to be 'Multi-Utility Services Company' (MUSCo) ready where viable and actively contribute to the development of networks where possible.

16.20 Important to taking forward regeneration will be working with the major landowner and linking with other regeneration measures in partnership with the LDA.

### Key drivers

- Public Realm Strategy (2009)
- Town Centre Study (2005 and 2008 Update)
- Merton’s Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy 2005 - 2010
- Mitcham Cricket Green Conservation Area Draft Character Assessment and boundary review (2007)
- Mitcham Town Centre Development Brief SPD (2006)

### Delivery and Monitoring

Further policy development may be considered in the long-term to coordinate development site opportunities, and encourage mechanisms to kick-start regeneration through key development sites to address the decline of the town centre and reduce inequalities. Given the complexity of regeneration and the current economic climate there will be a need to adequately address viability issues to ensure the achievement of high quality sustainable development. Strategic infrastructure needs that have already been identified for delivery in Mitcham are set out in Section Investment Priorities.

Other softer measures are expected to be delivered through the implementation of the Community Plan and the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy to reduce inequalities. There may also be long-term opportunities for partnership working with the London Borough of Sutton, to take forward the proposed Mitcham low carbon zone in conjunction with the proposed Hackbridge Sustainable Neighbourhood which lies immediately south of the borough boundary, building on the joint working on the Wandle Corridor.
### Table 1 Mitcham Sub Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Objective</th>
<th>Indicator(s)</th>
<th>Target(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To promote social cohesion and tackle deprivation by reducing inequalities.</td>
<td>Indices of Deprivation</td>
<td>Improvement in Indices of Deprivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Retail vacancy rate</td>
<td>Maintaining the retail vacancy rate below 10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Analysis

17.1 Morden’s built form has changed remarkably little since it was first developed in the late 1920s as a local convenience centre catalysed by the Underground station.

17.2 The areas housing offer is overwhelmingly dominated by suburban housing. Today, some buildings in Morden look outdated and some areas appear run-down and are in need of rejuvenation.

17.3 Morden is well served by public transport with an underground and bus interchange at the heart of the town centre with two rail stations and a tram stop in walking distance. Morden has a very busy road network including the A24, a Transport for London (TfL) road that cuts right through the town centre. The current traffic flow system and the location of the bus standing area dominates the town and has a negative impact on the look, feel and functionality of Morden as a place.

17.4 Morden’s role as a District Centre has diminished in the last decade as other nearby centres have expanded. Although Morden has a reasonable number of shops for a District Centre, the range and depth of the retail offer, as well as the quality of the premises and the goods sold, is not as good as it has the potential to be. Smaller, independent retailers are prevalent. However there are also a number of charity shops and fast food outlets. Despite the very high footfall not many people stay to use the services.

17.5 The Civic Centre and Mosque draw in a large number of visitors into Morden every week. Commercially, Morden provides local, convenience shopping for the local catchment area. The role of the centre needs redefining in order to recapture local spend and attract additional income.

17.6 Morden has a very strong ‘green’ infrastructure for a typically suburban centre, with Morden Hall Park and Morden Park at its periphery. It has the capacity to benefit from the success of Wimbledon and (potentially) Colliers Wood, sitting in the hinterland of each. Merton College is in close proximity to Morden town centre.

17.7 Key assets that should make up a successful town centre such as good public transport accessibility, proximity to London, employment opportunities, retailing, leisure, and open space all exist in Morden. However, these qualities are not always apparent or used to their potential and are often on the periphery of the centre itself; Morden has the capability to be far greater than at present.

Strategic Objective

17.8 Strategic Objective 2: To accommodate Merton’s population change within its centres and residential areas, without encroaching on other spaces.
Policy 4

Morden

To intensify development on underdeveloped sites by making more efficient use of land incorporating higher density housing and commercial opportunities that exploit Morden's excellent public transport links, while protecting the character and distinctiveness of the adjacent suburban neighbourhoods.

To create a distinctive and vibrant centre by making more of what Morden has to offer.

We will do this by:

a. Capitalising on Morden's excellent transport links and attractive suburban surroundings to make Morden a vibrant centre that people want to visit not just pass through;

b. Improving the quantity and quality of commercial, residential and leisure uses, with a range of uses that is appropriate to a District Centre;

c. Enhancing the accessibility between the town centre and its suburban hinterland and open spaces, by reducing severance caused by through traffic and greening Morden through tree planting and improved pedestrian routes;

d. Achieving high quality urban design, architecture and public realm incorporating high quality spaces and streets with pedestrians as the priority;

e. Providing more opportunities for the community to meet, socialise and make better use of their town centre through provision of attractive, safe and accessible public spaces and community, social, leisure and cultural facilities;

f. Ensuring major development incorporates low and zero carbon design and technologies.

Surrounding area of Morden Town Centre

g. Protecting and enhancing the suburban hinterland and the strong 'green' infrastructure provided by Upper Morden Conservation Area, Morden Hall Park and Morden Park and ensure all development respects and enhances local character;

h. Improvements to the public realm including repaving; provision of new cycle facilities and safety improvements of back alleyways and servicing bays;

i. Improving connectability of all transport modes e.g. between Morden South mainline station and Morden Tube station in partnership with TfL.
Justification

17.9  Morden is well placed to provide services and support that respond to changes in the way people work – offering alternatives to central London commuting yet retaining easy access to the city core. Research found low levels of small business, restaurant and a latent demand for leisure in Morden in comparison to similar town centres (by size and location on the underground network).

17.10  A change in perception of Morden is needed to make it a place where people want to visit rather than pass through. This will be created through reinforcing Morden’s natural and built heritage, which will play its part alongside high quality contemporary design for new buildings and public spaces. Opportunities for improvements to the streetscape are set out in the Public Realm Strategy.

17.11  The aim is to improve the number of people using the town centre and this will be facilitated by improving the quantity, quality and mix of housing offer through intensification of residential development at the heart of the town centre. It is estimated that Morden has the capacity to provide up to 2000 new residential units.

17.12  The Core Strategy Preferred Options set out a targeted approach to regeneration, recognising Morden as a District Centre where regeneration and revitalisation will be prioritised. LDF consultation responses have raised concerns that Morden is not able to serve local residents and it is, and may always be, a transport hub rather than a destination in its own right. The Preferred Options Sustainability Appraisal recognised the intense development from the regeneration focus in Morden town centre, acknowledging improvements such as retail provision will increase access for all.

17.13  Since the Preferred Options, the council has been leading the moreMorden project to provide a framework for regeneration and future development and managing growth in the town centre over a period of 15 years. Without an overarching regeneration strategy, there will be less market interest in Morden and less leverage to negotiate public realm improvements from TfL. A vision was consulted upon in 2008, that Morden will become a more attractive destination where a growing population can live, work, shop and socialise. 80% of respondents thought that the aims and objectives of the vision were right for Morden.

17.14  In accordance with Chapter 21 ‘Design - Policy 8’, the introduction of higher density development, including flats, into the town centre will provide for an under represented market in the area, increasing spending power and promoting a more balanced and cohesive community. Additional population within the centre itself will make existing businesses and services more viable and help sustain more facilities in the future, including potential to develop the evening economy. An Area Action Plan (AAP) will be prepared for the Morden District Centre that will provide a framework for future development, potentially including taller buildings.
17.15 The provision of new employment opportunities in the centre will also contribute to the economic sustainability of Morden as a whole. It is expected that commercial and community floorspace would be proportional to the level of residential development to reflect the overall scale of regeneration. Planning agreements will be sought from new development to achieve physical and social infrastructure improvements.

17.16 The scale and nature of regeneration plans offer an excellent opportunity to implement District Heat and Power networks, in accordance with Chapter 22 ‘Climate change - Policy 9’. All major development would be strongly encouraged to be ‘Multi-Utility Services Company’ (MUSCo) ready where viable and actively contribute to the development of networks where possible.

17.17 There are a number of realistic opportunities to regenerate Morden. The Council and Transport for London (TfL) together own, control and manage large tracts of land, property and the public realm in the town. Developing plans in partnership with TfL to improve the efficiency of the road network and the transport interchange for all users is essential to improving the functionality of the area and defining a future role and purpose for Morden.

17.18 There should be greater priority for pedestrians in the town centre. Creating a safer and friendlier pedestrian environment to encourage the high levels of footfall to linger and shop on their way to and from the underground is key to invigorating the local economy. Patronage of the local bus network in Morden is expected to rise by 40% over the next 15 years. It is already apparent that the current transport interchange is inadequate and will require improvements to cope with future demand. Although not in the current TfL work programme, the Council will continue to work with TfL to explore an option to extend the tram link network between Wimbledon and Sutton via Morden, with an interchange provided between the tram and Underground.

17.19 The National Trust are currently developing proposals for further improvements to Morden Hall Park and an upgrade to Morden Park Pool is planned to provide a mixed-use leisure facility.

17.20 The moreMorden vision was endorsed by the Council in March 2009; the aim is to change the perception of Morden, from somewhere people have to be, to a place people want to be. This is going to be achieved by regenerating Morden to be a sustainable town centre, important transport node and through generating a renewed sense of civic pride. Further work is planned to take this project forward in an Area Action Plan.

### Key drivers

- Public Realm Strategy (2009)
- Town Centre Study (2005 and 2008 Update)
- Volterra Economic Assessment (2008)
Delivery and Monitoring

The moreMorden project will continue towards consultation on development scenarios in 2010 to inform the preparation of a masterplan in an Area Action Plan to deliver the vision. Consultation during 2010 is expected to consider broad development scenarios based on different scales of development. A programme of short, medium and long term improvements to the town centre have been identified from 2008 to 2018 and beyond, and the Area Action Plan is expected to take forward public realm improvements.

Strategic infrastructure needs that have already been identified for delivery in Morden are set out in Section 30 ‘Infrastructure projects’. As identified above, partnership working will continue to progress regeneration.

Table 1 Morden Sub Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Objective</th>
<th>Indicator(s)</th>
<th>Target(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To accommodate Merton’s population change within its centres and residential areas, without encroaching on other spaces.</td>
<td>Production of Morden Regeneration AAP.</td>
<td>Adoption of Morden Regeneration AAP by 2014.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Retail vacancy rate</td>
<td>Maintaining retail vacancy rate below 10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
18 Raynes Park sub-area - Policy 5

Map 1 Raynes Park sub area
18 Raynes Park sub-area - Policy 5

Analysis

18.1 Raynes Park is a relatively affluent, attractive residential area with a mainline train station surrounded by a small Local Centre.

18.2 Most of the immediate surroundings of Raynes Park Local Centre are attractive tree lined streets. Gridiron Edwardian terraces merge into larger detached and semi-detached late 19th century houses to the north and 1930's suburbia to the south. There are small neighbourhoods laid out in an Inter-War "Garden City" style to the east, and some out-of-centre commercial development and residential apartments to the west.

18.3 Raynes Park has an excellent rail connection between central London and the south east, however within the Local Centre itself the railway line divides the community, acting as a barrier to movement and visibility between north and south.

18.4 There is good bus interchange either side of the station. Although Raynes Park is well connected by road, local routes are quite busy and the limited and narrow railway line crossings add to local congestion.

18.5 Raynes Park local centre contains a mix of unit styles and quality. It provides some convenience shopping, generally serving as top-up food shopping trips for commuters, a more limited range for comparison shopping, and a reasonable range of community uses including a library and health centres. Consultees have responded that the quality of shopping does not reflect the needs of the surrounding residential communities.

18.6 South of Raynes Park Local Centre is Bushey Road, which to the east leads up to Wimbledon Chase, and to the south west is Shannon Corner, meeting the A3 and the adjoining borough of Kingston-upon-Thames.

18.7 The major roads facilitate movement through the area between central London and the south east but create an unattractive physical environment, severing communities and making local journeys difficult especially for pedestrians and cyclists.

18.8 Bushey Road and surrounds suffer from congestion, on street parking problems and a poor quality street environment. Wimbledon Chase is served by a rail station and neighbourhood parade, but could benefit from environmental improvements. Around Shannon Corner are a number of large retail warehouses; in this out-of-centre location they are focused on visits by car, within a poor quality environment that does not encourage walking or cycling.

18.9 To the far south of Raynes Park local centre is Motspur Park local centre, surrounded by residential suburbia which merges into the neighbouring boroughs of Sutton and Kingston-upon-Thames.

Strategic Objective

18.10 Strategic Objective 2: To accommodate Merton's population change within its centres and residential areas, without encroaching on other spaces.
Policy 5

Raynes Park

To create an attractive local centre that reflects local physical and social character

We will do this by:

a. Improving the local environment and street scene, complementing initiatives started via the Raynes Park Local Centre Enhancement Plans;
b. Supporting development in Raynes Park Local Centre that provides for the needs of the local community;
c. Requiring development to respect local character and amenity, address flooding issues where appropriate;
d. Securing environmental and transport improvements for pedestrians and cyclists and improve public transport facilities.

Surrounding area of Raynes Park

e. Restricting further retail or leisure developments at Shannon Corner where these could compete with nearby town and local centres and generate trips by private transport. Businesses will be encouraged to locate at Shannon Corner where they could benefit from proximity to the strategic road network, not compete with nearby town centres or generate significant private car trips.
f. Supporting environmental improvements and maintaining the day-to-day shopping and other services at Motspur Park and Wimbledon Chase

Justification

18.11 Raynes Park Local Centre requires development that will help maintain its competitiveness without altering its suburban character or leading to further intensification.

18.12 The Town Centre Study and public consultation show that Raynes Park Local Centre should be maintained to ensure it provides basic food and grocery shopping facilities, supported by a limited choice and range of non food shops selling goods bought on a regular basis and a range of non-retail services and community uses. Since then a Waitrose store is being built which will meet the demand for food shopping on a scale compatible with the centre.

18.13 There is a perception among residents that the quality of the retail offer in Raynes Park does not match the affluence and spending power of the resident population and there is a need for businesses and services that serve the surrounding residential population, rather than taking overspill from Wimbledon town centre.
There are also calls for some business function to be maintained in the Local Centre, so that its employees can help support other local shops, restaurants and cafés during the day. A reliance on the commuter trade is not seen as enough to maintain a variety of quality services.

The Raynes Park Local Centre Enhancement Plan guides short to medium term investment in the physical environment that local residents and businesses have said are important to Raynes Park. It focuses on:

- improving access and circulation for pedestrians, cyclists, road traffic and public transport users;
- strengthening Raynes Park’s retail offer, making it a more attractive destination for local shopping needs; and
- improving the physical environment, appearance and maintenance of the public realm.

The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment identified the potential for flooding over parts of Raynes Park Local Centre and more so to the south around Beverley Way / Shannon Corner. Flooding in the local centre itself is attributed to high water levels in the nearby aquifer. Flooding at Shannon Corner / Beverley Way is attributed to fluvial flooding of Beverley Brook. Development in these areas should comply with most recent Environment Agency advice and Chapter 23 ‘Flood management - Policy 10’

Transport improvements for the Wimbledon Chase and Motspur Park areas have already been identified, including widening roads to ease traffic flow and provide better facilities for buses, pedestrians and cyclists, with planting to improve the quality of the environment. Proposals in the Public Realm Strategy will have considerable influence on these areas.

Major out-of-centre development which could undermine the vitality and viability of the Local Centre will be resisted, in accordance with Centres.

The area around Shannon corner is designated as a Strategic Industrial Location, although there is a large out-of-centre retail presence on many sites, including a Tesco Extra.

The area is very poorly served by public transport, has large amounts of on-site free car parking, excellent links to the road network and a retail offer focused on bulky goods. As a result, it attracts shoppers almost exclusively by car.

The busy roads, including the A3 flyover, retail sheds and large areas of parking combine to create an extremely unattractive local environment; it is difficult to navigate in anything other than a car.

While the existing retail sheds aren’t likely to be replaced under current market conditions, it is clear that, if the retail and leisure offer continues to expand or if the range of goods sold or services increased, Shannon Corner could harm the viability of Wimbledon Town Centre and other surrounding centres, for example New Malden in Kingston-upon-Thames.
18.23 In accordance with the London Plan and national guidance and as set out in Chapter 13 ‘Centres - Policy 1’, we will resist the expansion of out of centre activities, including retail, offices and other services that would be more appropriately located in town centres. Out-of-centre expansion of these activities could harm the viability and vitality of existing centres.

18.24 Further retail growth at Shannon Corner will be strongly resisted to support nearby existing centres such as Wimbledon and Raynes Park, prevent an increase in traffic congestion and local pollution. Development will be supported where it meets the demand for logistics and warehousing that can take advantage of its access to the major road network and quick journeys to central London and the south east.

Key drivers

- Public Realm Strategy (2009)
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2008)
- Merton’s Infrastructure Needs Assessment Study (2008)
- Town Centre Study (2005 and 2008 Update)

Delivery and Monitoring

Carrying out the works set out in the Raynes Park Local Centre Enhancement Plan, which include traffic and street scene improvements will improve the physical environment and make Raynes Park a more attractive destination. Beyond 2011, other issues that will be addressed include consideration of whether the Raynes Park local centre boundary should be expanded.

The area around Shannon Corner will be monitored closely to prevent further expansion of the out-of-centre retail element, and to improve the public realm where possible.

Table 1 Raynes Park Centre

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Objective</th>
<th>Indicator(s)</th>
<th>Target(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To accommodate Merton's population change within its centres and residential areas, without encroaching on other spaces.</td>
<td>Amount of completed retail and community development in Local Centre.</td>
<td>Additional retail and community development in Local Centre.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
19 Wandle Valley sub-area - Policy 6

Analysis

19.1 The Wandle Valley runs through the centre of the borough, part of a corridor which extends from Croydon to the mouth of the Wandle on the Thames in Wandsworth. Providing 10% of London's total employment, the Wandle Valley Corridor encompasses several town centres, local centres and business areas.

19.2 The area is identified as a strategic corridor for regeneration in the London Plan and draft South East Plan. It falls within a wider corridor of national importance, through south London towards Croydon and Gatwick Airport and beyond to the south coast, in which the Wandle Valley provides a particularly important set of development opportunities. In Merton, the London Plan has identified an Area for Intensification at Colliers Wood /South Wimbledon.

19.3 In Merton, there are several significant employment areas characterised by a discontinuous range of larger industrial areas and relatively small industrial sites. This includes the industrial areas at Durnsford Road, Morden Road and Willow Lane. Many businesses in the Wandle Valley are in a supply-chain relationship with the central London economy.

19.4 Historically, the Wandle Valley has been an industrial location since the seventeenth century and was a major industrial heartland in the nineteenth century, where water mills helped power industries such as textile making and copper engraving. In Merton, the river's industrial heritage can be seen at Merton Abbey Mills where the waterwheel and some older industrial buildings are preserved to form an attractive marketplace.

19.5 Although the river Wandle is culverted near its mouth, the Wandle Valley links a chain of green spaces at the south of Wandsworth (Southfields, Lambeth Cemetery) through into Merton - Wandle Park, Morden Hall Park, Ravensbury Park through into Sutton's green spaces at Beddington Lane and eventually into Croydon. The Wandle Trail path, accessible alongside much of the river is an attraction for walkers, cyclists and anglers as well as the other sports and leisure uses for those using the parks that it connects.

19.6 The Wandle Valley is covered by the Blue Ribbon network, with its aims to protect and enhance biodiversity and the natural landscape. The green chain is important for species movement throughout south London and there are a number of protected species that are found along its length.

19.7 However extensive areas of the Wandle Valley are also liable to flooding, including a significant part of the proposed Area for Intensification and at the Greyhound Stadium at Plough Lane.
Strategic Objective

19.8 To make Merton a healthier and better place for people to live and work in or visit.

Policy 6

Wandle Valley

To support the creation of the Wandle Valley Regional Park and opportunities to rejuvenate the area as a key business corridor.

The Council’s objectives to deliver this vision are to:

a. Achieve a high quality, linked green infrastructure network, protecting biodiversity and providing opportunities for formal and informal recreation;

b. Protect archaeological sites and enhance Wandle Valley Conservation Area and raise awareness of this heritage including Merton Priory and Merton Abbey Mills.

c. Seek improvements to the transport accessibility to and within the area;

d. Protect and enhance the industrial areas to ensure an adequate supply of land for employment uses and maximise employment opportunities, particularly for SMEs;

e. Protect and enhance the River Wandle, including its green chains, biodiversity and wildlife corridors;

f. Work with the Environment Agency and GLA to explore viable and appropriate measures contribute to minimising flood risk.

Justification

19.9 The London Plan sets out to create a new Regional Park that integrates with the regeneration of the Wandle Valley Corridor as one of the strategic priorities for South West London.

19.10 A new Regional Park has the potential to improve access to a linked network of open space, including parkland, wildlife areas, riverside walks and facilities for children and young people. This will increase the quality of the environment and contribute to the identity of the valley as a place to live, work and visit. The development of an implementation plan for the Regional Park is being explored by Groundwork and key stakeholders including Wandsworth, Merton, Sutton and Croydon councils and the Wandle Forum.
Picture 1 Proposed Wandle Valley Regional Park
19.11  The Wandle Valley could be a more significant visitor attractor for the borough, as a cultural and sporting facility as well as a vital green asset to deliver a wide range of improvements, for example providing an attractive route for cyclists to encourage sustainable commuting patterns. The park also provides opportunities to address the flooding constraints identified in the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. Merton’s Community Plan recognises the importance of the natural environment and biodiversity and the opportunity to maximise the value of the River Wandle green corridor.

19.12  The Core Strategy Preferred Options highlighted the importance of Merton’s role in helping regenerate the Wandle Valley corridor, building on its economic potential, improving its natural environment and open space, and raising its tourism potential. The Preferred Options Sustainability Appraisal recognised the significant impact this will have, positive in terms of regeneration, housing and employment growth, with benefits to health and access to open space.

19.13  The area has the potential to provide an important resource for a wide catchment area and to combine a range of functions. In accordance with the Chapter 27 ‘Economic development - Policy 16’ business employment opportunity will be supported. Parts of the area offer regeneration potential, including the Area for Intensification as outlined in Colliers Wood /South Wimbledon, which is explained further in Chapter 15 ‘Colliers Wood sub-area - Policy 2’

19.14  As explained in Chapter 15 ‘Colliers Wood sub-area - Policy 2’ the London Plan has identified opportunities for potential growth in the Colliers Wood / South Wimbledon Area for Intensification, including the Wimbledon Greyhound Stadium site, Wandle Valley Sewage Works; the former Wimbledon Football Club site and Durnsford Road industrial area. However all of these sites set out in the London Plan for growth are located within the functional floodplain. Proposals for these sites will therefore have to have regard to Environment Agency advice on flood mitigation measures, while remaining viable and creating attractive and useful developments.

19.15  Taken as a whole, the Wandle Valley Corridor represents a strategic opportunity for the whole sub-region. Traditional manufacturing remains important but newer activities are emerging including some related to the media and aviation and could be encouraged to diversify the economic base. Improved sub-regional and local transport links could help to rejuvenate parts of the Wandle Valley. The opportunities that this could provide would be accessible to deprived inner London communities as well as residents elsewhere within the sub-region.

19.16  However there are significant barriers to development including flooding, poor public transport access and issues of utility supply including water, sewerage and electricity. The designated industrial estates are essential to attracting environmental technologies, including recycling sites and construction businesses as supported by Chapter 27 ‘Economic development - Policy 16’

19.17  New transport is needed to improve access, particularly by road and public transport to industrial areas and improving pedestrian access from existing facilities, with potential for a tram route in the future. Improvements should enhance linkages with the Wandle Corridor, to address access, environmental quality and biodiversity, employment and leisure uses.
19.18 The Wandle Valley Conservation Area contributes to Merton’s rich architectural heritage and diverse built environment. It includes Merton Priory, a monastic complex first established on the site in 1117AD and continuously rebuilt, extended and occupied until the Dissolution in 1538. It also includes Merton Abbey Mills which housed a series of water based and water powered industrial works developed on the site of the Priory from the 17th century, some of which continued to operate in the 20th century.

19.19 The site now contains visible and buried remains of Merton Priory, including a purpose built Chamber housing the foundations of the Chapter House of the Priory as well as a number of objects associated with the original building. The Merton Abbey Mills site contains a wealth of visible remains including; two early industrial buildings originally associated with the fabric printing works of Edmund Littler and Liberty & Co and the site of the design workshops and works of William Morris, founder of the Arts and Crafts Movement.

19.20 Although much of the site of Merton Priory has been redeveloped, the chamber and the surrounding area generally, provides a resource for research, education and inspiration by virtue of its historic value and connections. We are working with appropriate local partners to see if we can improve the interpretation and presentation of the remains and will engage with the local community to raise awareness of the historical significance of the site.

19.21 The Wandle Valley Conservation Area is an integral part of Merton’s identity. Developments should respect its designation as such. There are a number of overhead power cables which include 20 pylons on the Beddington - Wimbledon overhead. The Council will support the relocation of existing power lines, pylons and other visually intrusive servicing as part of planning agreements in relation to new developments where it is technically, practically, environmentally, and economically viable.

### Key drivers

- Wandle Valley Regional Park: A vision for the future (2008)
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2008)
- Heart of Merton Study (2008)
- Wandle Valley Conservation Area Revised Draft Character Assessment (2007)
- PPG17 Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation (2002)
Delivery and Monitoring

We are already working in partnership with a number of organisations to establish the Wandle Valley Regional Park, including Groundwork, Wandsworth, Sutton and Croydon councils, and the Wandle Forum. Working with Sustrans, TfL and both Wandsworth and Sutton councils is key to realising the potential of the Wandle Trail not only as a leisure route but as a pedestrian and cycle commuter route to local areas of employment.

It is expected that development proposals in the Wandle Valley will be taken forward on a site by site basis, alongside an ongoing programme of environmental enhancements subject to funding. Strategic infrastructure needs that have already been identified for delivery in the Wandle Valley are set out in Section 30 ‘Infrastructure projects’.

Further guidance may be relevant for any redevelopment around Plough Lane, to realise the potential of the area and where partnership working will be necessary, such as to align any development with the neighbouring industrial area in Wandsworth.

Table 1 Wandle Valley sub area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Objective</th>
<th>Indicator(s)</th>
<th>Target(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To make Merton a healthier and better place for people to live and work in or visit.</td>
<td>Progress towards designation of Wandle Valley Regional Park</td>
<td>Creation of Wandle Valley Regional Park.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lower employment vacancy space</td>
<td>Maintain employment vacancy space below 8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Improve provision for SMEs.</td>
<td>Increase amount of business space that caters for SMEs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>