



TACKLING THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY

A submission by Mitcham Cricket Green Community & Heritage to London Borough of Merton

December 2019

1. Mitcham Cricket Green Community & Heritage takes an active interest in the future of the Cricket Green Conservation Area and its environs. We are the civic society for this part of Merton and part of the wider civic movement through membership of the national charity Civic Voice. We have been closely involved in the development of the Merton Local Plan, Borough Character Studies, the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan and numerous development proposals in the area. Our approach to development and change in the area is established in the Cricket Green Charter which was refreshed in 2019 with the support of London Borough of Merton and local councillors (<https://mitchamcricketgreen.org.uk/cricket-green-charter/>). The Charter has been acknowledged in the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan for Cricket Green. We have also contributed to production of the Merton Heritage Strategy as a member of the Merton Heritage Forum. We are members of The Canons Steering Group delivering a £5m Lottery funded project and also undertake practical projects, organise walks and run Mitcham Heritage Day and Community on the Green.

2. We commend Merton Council for declaring a Climate Emergency in July 2019. As a group we do not have a long track record of engaging on climate change related issues. During the development of our refreshed Cricket Green Charter it was evident that we should develop a stronger ambition around the issue and the Charter includes the principle that *"Mature trees throughout the area should be protected and a programme of succession planting of trees and more hedges supported to reduce air pollution and help tackle the climate emergency."*

3. In addressing the Climate Emergency we urge Merton Council also to ensure any measures respect the historic environment of Mitcham Cricket Green Conservation Area and its environs. We see a close alignment of measures for tackling the Climate Emergency which also protect and improve the historic and natural environment. It will be imperative to securing continuing wide public support for climate action that this is not seen to cause harm to the local environment. Delivery of the approach set out in the Cricket Green Charter will support action to tackle the Climate Emergency.

4. We believe further measures to tackle the Climate Emergency should include:

- Significant strengthening of the approach emerging in the revised Merton Local Plan, building on Merton's track record of innovative policy development in this field which was recognised with an RTPI Award in 2006 for the "[Merton Rule](#)" requiring 10% of energy in new development to be from renewable sources – which was made a universal legislative requirement in 2008

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- A raised ambition and stronger delivery of Merton’s Air Quality Action Plan
- Introduction of zero emission vehicles across Merton Council’s fleet and making this a requirement of all contracts
- Introduction of zero emission vehicles for all buses throughout the borough, prioritising the introduction to those which run along the most polluted routes (including Mitcham’s Fair Green and London Road)
- Integration of climate and air quality objectives into the LIP programme for local transport investment, including:
 - a ban on heavy lorries running on Church Road between Lower Green West and Benedict Wharf;
 - changed traffic flows at Lower Green West to remove the existing “roundabout” configuration and reconnect it to Lower Green East (Cricket Green); and
 - improved pedestrian permeability in Fair Green and Cricket Green with enhanced pedestrian crossings and reduced crossing times
 - new traffic management measures (such as a yellow box) at the junction of the new bus road and Holborn Way to reduce queues of idling buses
 - removal of the short term parking bays introduced as part of the Rediscover Mitcham project. These encourage fly-parking when the bays are all full and the short term nature of the parking is regularly abused. With little or no enforcement, these bays are an effective encouragement to travel by car as well as an unsightly blight on Fair Green
- Integration of climate and air quality objectives into the green space maintenance contract delivered by idverde, including:
 - management plans for all the borough’s green spaces, which integrate climate objectives
 - changed maintenance practices which provides ongoing maintenance and watering of trees, hedgerows and shrubs; reduces mowing; supports wild areas; and adopts flexible working practices that avoid, for example, cutting wet grass
 - use of machinery and vehicles which meets high environmental standards and a rapid transition to electric vehicles
- An embargo on the felling of mature trees other than in the most exceptional circumstances, supported by a pro-active programme of placing Tree Protection Orders on the Borough’s significant tree cover
- A major programme of succession planting of trees and hedges throughout Mitcham to conserve and enhance tree cover, especially along major routes, informed by Merton Council’s arboricultural expertise and supported by a strategic plan identifying suitable locations for new planting and ensuring ongoing care and maintenance of the new and existing stock
- A requirement in all travel plans for schools and new development to demonstrate how they will contribute to reduced carbon emissions and a commitment from Merton Council to monitor and enforce these travel plans and put an end to the constant buck passing which sees neither schools nor police nor enforcement teams willing to take responsibility

- Enforcement against idling cars and lorries which extends beyond any plans to act on idling outside schools
- Community consultation over the location of a network of electric vehicle charging points of an improved design in Mitcham
- Improved and new pedestrian and cycling connections between Mitcham and the Wandle Trail and open spaces, including Willow Lane Industrial Estate using sensitively designed routes and surfaces and minimal lighting to cause the least possible harm to the natural environment and wildlife
- Active promotion of Mitcham Common as a source of health and well being and as a carbon sink including:
 - opening up the Ecology Centre as an affordable location for hosting community-led activity promoting health and well being and climate action
 - management and planting of Mitcham Common with a priority to absorb carbon and boost biodiversity.

5. We look forward to contributing to the development and delivery of the urgent action required.