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## Foreword by the Panel Chair

In the autumn of 2003 the Regeneration and Public Realm Scrutiny Panel decided to undertake a scrutiny review on Smarter, clutter-free - so safer streets and better design of street environment. The aim was to find out how public areas in Merton could be designed to cater for the needs of the diverse groups of people using them and also what might be done to improve the status quo. This issue is related to Merton's Community Plan, particularly with reference to the corporate priorities: of 'Thriving Merton: the regeneration of town centres', 'Equalities Merton: to introduce changes to develop easier community access to services' and 'Safe, clean and green Merton: keep streets and open spaces clean and well-maintained'.

The task group has visited almost all parts of the Borough to take evidence. We have reviewed the ward survey to see what street clutter people are most eager to get rid of. My postbag has also included reference to disabled access issues. Voluntary groups in the Borough were written to in order to obtain views and to establish what problems are experienced by disabled people. Quite a few useful suggestions were given to us this way as well as an invitation from Merton Voluntary Association for the Blind to try their 'simulated vision spectacles': to get a view of how street clutter can be hazardous. Three of us tried this and it made us realise how difficult it is negotiate our cluttered streets with impaired vision.

The panel agreed a number of recommendations that will improve the streets of Merton. We welcome and support the Street design manual and know that it will assist in making our Borough more accessible to everybody in the future.

A large number of people have contributed to this review and I would like to thank everybody for that support particularly Åsa Melander, of the Scrutiny Team, whose enthusiasm galvanized us all and to the panel members whose commitment was unstinting. Merton's desire to reach excellence will be nearer as a result.

Councillor Andy Coles  
Chair, the Regeneration and Public Realm Scrutiny Panel

## Regeneration and Public Realm Scrutiny Panel

### Councillors

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Stephen Hammond, Vice Chair  
Tariq Ahmad  
Stephen Alambritis  
Matt Bird  
Mary Dunn  
Dot Kilsby  
Dennis Pearce

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## Introduction

At the Overview & Scrutiny Commission meeting on 29 July 2003 the Commission asked that the Regeneration and Public Realm Scrutiny Panel should undertake a review. The panel was requested to choose between a) 'Smarter, clutter-free – so safer streets and design of street environment' and b) 'Community bulky waste clearance scheme'. The suggested review was measured against scrutiny's criteria<sup>1</sup> for a review and that it shall:

- ✓ contribute to corporate objectives/community plan
- ✓ be a significant issue in terms of its effect on local people
- ✓ not replicate work already carried out
- ✓ be specific in aim
- ✓ carry an opportunity for improved performance
- ✓ be achievable
- ✓ engage the public

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<sup>1</sup> As agreed at the Commission meeting of 10 June 2003

- ✓ be balanced in terms of departments involved and client groups (i.e. reviews being carried out on the other panels are not calling on the same council departments/ users for assistance/consultation)

The panel chose to carry through a review on Smarter, clutter-free streets. This review meets the criteria set out by the Overview & Scrutiny Commission with the possible exception of 'does not replicate work already carried out'. Through our research we do not believe this to be the case.

A set of recommendations has been set out on how to improve the design of and use of material and construction for streets. This has initiated a process of reviewing a policy document, the street design manual. This is a guidance to staff on use of material, colours etc. The panel has read and commented on the preliminary guide.

The ward survey 2000 clearly indicated that the state of the physical environment is the dominant concern to Merton residents. This area should be a priority for the council. The (former) Environment & Regeneration overview and scrutiny panel recently produced an action plan to tackle graffiti and other envirocrime that could contribute to smarter streets.

## **Summary of recommendations**

- Pavement parking should be enforced more.
- Full-time Town Centre Managers should be appointed.
- Street furniture should be inspected and repaired/taken away. The street watch scheme could be used to assist with identifying specific issues.
- Street furniture and litterbins should be standardised.
- New developments should follow the best practice in this document when planned.
- Rubbish bags should be removed as soon as possible.
- A council number is printed on litter-bins so that rubbish bags can easily be reported.
- Rules regarding A-boards and unauthorised advertising should be enforced.
- Checks regarding uneven pavements are enforced.
- A consistent signage policy is adopted.
- Checks for contradictory signs are carried out when a new sign is set up, signs are put up higher than today so that high vehicles do not block them and road signs should be consistent.
- Flowerbeds that become unsightly as result of extensive vandalism should be considered for removal.

## 1.0 Why smarter, clutter-free streets?

Public areas should be designed for the many different people and groups using them. Streets and pavements need maintenance to suit wheelchair users, trolleys, prams, people with disabilities and businesses who use the pavements for marketing or to store their goods. The council is responsible for keeping track of the state of pavements etc. to make sure that they are accessible and practical for everybody who uses them.

Attractive street environments can attract more businesses and people and contribute to a better local economy:

'The 1996 London Town Centre Health Check showed that Forest Gate had declined sharply as a town centre. Newham Borough Council was concerned that this decline in local retail facilities would reinforce social exclusion in an already deprived area. The main part of the shopping parade is a terrace of Victorian three-storey properties, which looked run-down and had been subject to many unattractive alterations. ... New fascia signs have been installed in the original positions to give continuity to the terrace, and windows have been reinstated to fit the original style of the building. An ugly dormer has been removed, improving the roofline, and joinery, brickwork and shop pilasters have been improved or replaced. ... It is too early to assess the long-term benefits of the scheme, but the work has had a real impact on the physical appearance of the primary shopping area in Forest Gate. The improvements have also safeguarded the jobs of existing employees since owners who were previously thinking of selling up are now more optimistic about the future of the parade. The local newsagent commented, "People are for the first time seeing the quality and history of their street. It has also inspired us to spend our own money. We repaired the back of the building at the same time. If this scheme had not happened, we were thinking of closing down. Now we'll be here for some years to come".'<sup>2</sup>

For some residents, well-maintained pavements and public areas mean that they can get out from their homes and interact in the local community. There are currently areas in Merton that are not very well maintained and that cause problems to residents, especially people with mobility problems. The aim of this review is to give recommendations as to what the council could do to improve the public areas to suit all residents and to potentially attract more businesses, particularly to areas where there are few businesses (e.g. Morden).

### 1.1 Community Plan and corporate priorities

A number of priorities in the Community Plan support a review on smarter, clutter-free streets:

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<sup>2</sup> A year of liveability challenges, 2003-2004: Improvement and Development Agency, [www.idea.gov.uk](http://www.idea.gov.uk)

- 'promote the development of local communities/sense of neighbourhood'
- 'restore a sense of civic pride in Merton'
- 'regenerate Merton's town centres'
- 'encourage new companies to come to Merton'

By creating a more pleasant environment for people and businesses we can help to regenerate the town centres and encourage new companies to establish themselves in the Borough and to enhance the well being of local community. Smarter, clutter-free streets are also directly related to the Council's corporate objectives – as set out in the Best Value Performance Plan 2003 - especially in the area of:

- Thriving Merton: regeneration of town centres
- Equalities Merton: introduce changes to develop easier community access to services
- Safe, clean and green Merton: keep streets and open spaces clean and well-maintained
- Safe, clean and green Merton: provide a safer and more secure environment

## **1.2 Terms of reference**

Suggested list of things to look at:

1. stopping shops putting out 'A' boards in front of their shops ('A-boards' are the double-sided advertisement boards that in profile resemble the letter A)
2. removing illegal unauthorized advertising signs and similar obstructions as well as vehicles for sale
3. putting up one post with three signs on rather than three posts with a sign each
4. better design of street furniture
5. replacing street furniture (such as rubbish bins) with smart, black and gold 'traditional' bins - as they need replacing
6. encouraging businesses to bring back traditional heritage shop-fronts rather than big, plastic illuminated signs
7. encouraging sponsorship schemes for hanging baskets, roundabouts or flower beds
8. use of art and creative lighting in public places
9. smart and high-quality paving (street-cleaning machines are heavy and sometimes ruin the paving of streets)
10. looking into estate agents' use of public spaces (pavements) for signs (signs may be attached to fences, but are really on the pavement)
11. how to avoid cars parking on the pavements
12. goods displayed outside shops – nuisance or nice?

The issue of litter was discussed – should it be added to the terms of reference? It was decided that litter should not be dealt with in this review but as a separate issue at a later date.

A Street Design Guide that prescribes standards for street maintenance has been reviewed during 2003/04. The aim of the guide is related to that of the task group's. Lee Baldwin and Phil Ryder have introduced the guide to the group. The group has had the possibility to make comments and suggest additions to the guide.

### **1.3 Existing schemes to target signs, street clutter etc.**

No specific arrangements are in place for the examination of streets for the potential rationalisation or consideration of removing redundant street furniture or sign clutter. By its nature clutter develops over time as independent activities are carried out on the highway and consequently the opportunity to remove a sign here or a bin there, whilst possible, is unlikely to make a great impact on the overall street scene.

However, a full inventory and condition survey has recently been completed of all non illuminated street furniture and the results of this will be used not only to target existing maintenance funds more effectively but also to identify old and possibly redundant items and this may offer some scope for rationalisation and reduction.

When it is proposed to undertake significant maintenance works such as footway reconstruction or carriageway resurfacing the opportunity is taken to consider what rationalisation of signing and other street scene issues can be made. Currently that is undertaken as an ad-hoc process but the review of the Merton Street Design Guide will focus attention on the need to consider a whole range of street scene issues when planning significant maintenance schemes.

### **1.4 How evidence was gathered**

How can we improve our streets to make them safer and clutter-free? In order to gain an understanding for problems in different areas the panel has visited almost all parts of the Borough to see and photograph evidence of cluttered streets. Some examples of good practice have also been found.

- Morden, 29 October 2003: Cllr Coles, Phil Ryder, Brian Hodge, Åsa Melander
- Mitcham, 6 November 2003: Cllr Dunn, Phil Ryder, Brian Hodge, Åsa Melander
- Raynes Park, 8 November 2003: Cllr Coles, Phil Ryder
- Colliers Wood, 8 November 2003: Cllrs Coles & Kilsby
- Pollards Hill, Wimbledon Chase, 10 November 2003: Cllr Coles
- Wimbledon, 15 November 2003: Cllrs Coles & Pearce, Åsa Melander
- Figges Marsh, 18 November 2003: Cllr Dunn, Phil Ryder, Brian Hodge, Åsa Melander

Some photographs from these visits are published in this report.

The panel has also written to around 80 groups representing old and young people, ethnic groups and people with disabilities to consult and see if there are

any other problems they encounter that the panel should consider. 11 replies have been received and discussed within the panel.

Three members of the panel have taken up an offer by the Merton Voluntary Association for the Blind: 'I would be pleased to offer the Regeneration and Public Realm Overview & Scrutiny Panel the opportunity to try our 'simulated vision spectacles' (in a controlled and safe environment) to get a better view of how 'street clutter' can be hazardous if you have reduced vision.'

The panel has also written to four members of the Federation of Small Businesses in Merton to get comments from them as to their perceptions of smarter, clutter-free streets. The panel has also contacted Mitcham Business Forum and Merton Chamber of Commerce. No evidence has been submitted.

## **2.0 Review findings: Smart and clutter-free streets in Merton?**

Evidence gathered by reading the ward surveys, by replies from voluntary organisations and by visiting the Borough is presented.

### **2.1 Ward survey**

The ward survey was checked for comments regarding smarter, clutter-free streets. Comments made by residents in all wards:

- Weeds growing through pavements
- Car parked on pavements
- Poor street lighting
- Bad paving/uneven pavements/broken pavement stones



Other comments:

- Trees/hedges/shrubs need to be cut; trees overgrowing lights
- Flooding/blocked drains/bad drainage/gullies never cleared
- Cars parked on yellow lines
- Need public toilets
- Gutters full of weed
- No flowers in public beds
- Refuse collection bags on pavement hazard to blind and old
- Bikes and pizza bikes parked on pavements a problem
- Ugly street furniture – neglected and left to rust
- More bike racks
- Posters on highways

## **2.2 Replies from voluntary organisations**

11 replies were given by voluntary organisations, most of which supported the terms of reference, but some new suggestions were also given. Some of these do not really fall within the task group's remit but have been included here for transparency.

- Good quality street lighting to deter crime and ensure partially sighted elders can see obstacles.
- Pavements even if they are re-laid should be kept in good repair to prevent falls that are particularly dangerous and life changing for older people.
- Goods displayed outside shops pose the same hazard.
- Any crossings or changes in level be marked well for partially sighted people (a high proportion of older people have some sort of sight disability).
- Wheelchair users have great difficulty with high kerbs and poorly maintained pavements and crossings.
- Dog excretia - upholding policy via martialing of hotspots at busy dog walking times.
- Pathway surfacing, e.g. from Rock Terrace Green to Park View Drive (currently a mud bath) and Windsor Ave to Station Road (uneven and hard to walk on for elderly and for wheelchairs) etc.
- It would be good if all push buttons operating machines are mounted on post near the edge of the pavements and on the left hand side of the crossing. At present this does not apply some being on the right and some even mounted on walls at the rear of the pavement and some being sited in the middle of the pavement.
- One of the big issues here is graffiti. Another point I want to bring to your attention is the rubbish that's left everywhere (e.g. at bus stops, alleyways, on the road) and nobody seems to bother tidying it up – Road sweepers.
- Broken pavements
- Builders materials left on pavement
- Broken glass
- Dog fouling
- Cyclists on pavements

- Rubbish bags
- Overhanging branches/trees
- Volunteers worried about cycling on the pavements and what of the motorized mini scooters what are they classed as a vehicle, tax insurance etc.
- I would like to make a personal comment on contents, to make the streets smarter more clutter free etc. Surely the first thing is to have them swept. Rutlish Road and other local streets have not been cleaned for several years. Needless to say, the leaves etc. have to wait for natural decay. In the meantime they remain a hazard for people, especially of course to the elderly and disabled and during the present wet weather.
- The pavement near our office in Kingston Road is a particularly bad example of unsafe streets - it is almost obstructed by overgrown bushes and pedestrians have to step into heavy, fast moving traffic to pass each other. The Council surely has a role in ensuring the pavement is passable.
- A business in Merton High Street is an example of how the street environment can deteriorate - up to 20 motorbikes are offered for sale on a double yellow line outside this shop. The bikes are untaxed and uninsured and are degreased in the road with the effluent flowing into public drains. The bikes obstruct the cycle path and occasionally the access for emergency vehicles.
- At Hamilton Road work has been in progress on a formerly derelict house for the past year. The road and the pavement are invariably obstructed for motorists and pedestrians and the site presents a hazard to children playing nearby.
- A lady living opposite Morden Park where all the students leave the bus for college says there is a vast amount of litter – this needs clearing.
- People who park their car in the front garden have tarmaced the pavement area to the road, but this “tilts/slants” towards the curb is dangerous for pedestrians.
- How to avoid cars parking over and in front of dropped kerbs.
- To give, if possible, advanced notification of pavement works for visually impaired people. This could be done using the talking newspaper or by contacting venues and activities regularly frequented by visually impaired people.
- Keeping over hanging shrubs pruned back on residential roads.
- Reducing the number of tables and chairs spilling out on to the pavements in front of shops/cafes.

The answers from the voluntary organisations highlighted that it is difficult or impossible to make the streets optimal for everybody – wheelchair users need evened out kerbs at crossings to be able to pass, but this causes problems for people with impaired vision as they will neither be able to feel where the street starts nor will their guide dogs know the difference between pavement and street.

### **2.3 Simulated vision spectacles**

Cllrs Coles, Dunn & Kilsby took up the offer to meet with Merton Voluntary Association for the Blind and try their 'simulated vision spectacles. Cllr Coles denoted that 'There are many hazards for people with impaired sight in our Borough, rubbish bags left on pavements are one of them, uneven pavements are another one. This experience helped us to understand what difficulties there are for people with impaired sight, often things that we do not normally recognise.' Cllr Dunn: 'I walked into a ladder outside Wimbledon station. If there are maintenance people working they need to make sure they move their equipment afterwards so that people can pass freely.'

### **2.4 Visits to the Borough**

On the visits to the Borough, the panel found evidence of all things listed in the terms of reference, bar hanging baskets (sponsorship schemes for), use of art and creative lighting and high-quality paving.

A general conclusion is that the Borough is full of A-boards that block the way for pedestrians, illegal and unauthorised signs, lamp posts next to a post set up merely for one additional sign, cars parked on pavements, old, broken and sometimes dangerous street furniture and a wealth of different kinds of litterbins (the panel has pictures of at least 17 different ones). Many pavements are fully or partly blocked by A-boards – there are examples of shops that have 7 signs put up. Uneven pavements turned out to be a big problem.

#### *Litter-bins*

At least 15 different types of litterbins were found. The Council has chosen different types at different times, yet not taken the old ones away. There has also been a trend to have different bins in different areas for identification. The group discussed the possibility of standardising bins – similar design and colour to ensure branding across the Borough. This could also apply to e.g. street furniture.

#### *Street furniture*

Many benches were found to be in a bad state. Benches should be inspected by the highway team and repaired or taken away. The budget is small and budgetary restraints make it hard to inspect areas more often. Benches are often set up after a request from the public. After this they should be maintained regularly, but the team often has no knowledge of benches that have been vandalised etc. The street watch scheme might improve the situation. The street watch scheme is a community scheme that enables residents to work in partnership with the council to improve local environment. Street Watch members act as extra eyes and ears for the council in their neighbourhood. Members are encouraged to keep a look out for a variety of environmental problems and to report them to the council. This will make it easier for the council to take action sooner.

### *Uneven pavements and pavement parking*

Many pavements are very uneven. Pavements are inspected on a regular basis - every six months in residential areas and every 80 days in town centres. Many cars were also seen parked on pavements. Although the panel recognises that that this kind of parking is illegal it also acknowledges that the parking enforcement department must weigh this against practical and safety implications. The Council wants to encourage sustainable transports, and space for pedestrians should therefore be kept for them. Pavement stones may also crack if cars - particularly vans and heavier - park on them. Evidence for this was found in Raynes Park. Pavement parking is currently not enforced if a buggy or a wheelchair can pass by on the pavement. Parking on grass verges is never allowed. The patrol does not look actively for cars parked on pavements, but respond if they get a complaint.

Footway damage caused by parking is generally confined to streets that are surfaced with traditional slab paving laid on a mortar bed, which allows for some slight ground movement beneath the footway without causing trips. The slabs and mortar are unable to sustain the loads imposed by parked vehicles and the slabs either get displaced causing trips to occur or they crack or break. In an effort to limit the extent of such damage it has been common practice to provide a verge strip constructed in concrete and bituminous surfacing material, which can sustain light vehicle loading. This is a practical means by which the edge of the footway can be protected from vehicle damage. It was started many years ago as parking and traffic levels increased to the point where people were more inclined to park with 2 wheels on the footway to keep traffic moving in the road. That became a tried and tested way of protection that became widespread.

If the result of vehicle damage to paving is considered dangerous it is repaired within 24 hours but cracked paving may remain for some time as it is not considered dangerous. Residents do complain that it should be repaired as it is unsightly.

In general terms ASP paving is largely confined to residential streets and where practicable recurring incidents of footway damage are addressed by the provision of posts on the footway, until such time as full reconstruction of the footway surface is required.

However, in London Road, Mitcham opportunity has recently been taken to repave the footway with thicker ASP bedded on a concrete foundation, a solution in line with suggestions by English Heritage in their publication 'Street for all'.

In the past the Street Management department has set Service Plan targets for the reduction of footway tripping accidents. Specific targets quantified the amount of 'higher risk' paving to be replaced annually. The town centres and more important streets such as those with bus routes or shopping parades have been targeted and considerable stretches of ASP footway have been replaced with a

Bitmac construction, which is able to resist the loads of heavy vehicles parked illegally.

There are approximately 680Km of footway within the Borough and their life expectancy would be expected to be between 15 to 20 years in a Town Centre to 25 to 30 years in residential streets. The current planned maintenance budget is sufficient only to treat approximately 10 to 12 Km of footway annually, which equates to each street being re-laid approximately every 60 to 70 years. If a member of the public calls about a broken pavement, it will normally be checked the same day. If a utility company digs up the pavement, it should be brought back to an agreed national standard. Checks are normally carried through and are often paid for by the utility company. When the guarantee time expires, the pavement is always checked.

Transport for London is responsible for the two red routes that run through the Borough – A24 and A297. The council has regular meetings with TfL and sometimes suggests pavements/roads that need maintenance, but have no powers of intervention.

### *Railings*

Railings are painted yellow near schools. The meeting asked if it is possible to buy 'already yellow' railings that must not be painted (maintained). Officers are not aware of any such railings. The meeting discussed the need for railings – how much safety 'is lost' if railings are taken away – sometimes there are large gaps anyway. The task group agreed that the need for railings should be considered when planning new town centres, e.g. Mitcham, but that taking existing ones away would cost too much for the potential benefits it would give.

### *Signs*

Many incorrect signs – e.g. a sign with 'no right turn' next to a sign saying 'speed humps right' – and unnecessary signs were found.

The need for street signs with/without postcodes was also discussed. Those street nameplates that are within the London postal area are provided with the postcode suffix SW19, SW20, but streets outside those areas are not. It would be possible to include the first half of any postcode on all nameplates for example Tudor Drive SM4.

The commonly available street maps and indexes generally list them by the town they are in and therefore it is considered doubtful whether the addition of any further postcode information would significantly assist the public in finding addresses in the Borough.

In addition the cost of a nameplate is dependant on the number of characters and therefore costs would increase slightly if such a proposal was adopted. Resources might be better focussed on providing an improved quantity of nameplates at each road junction.

During the past two years the replacement policy has been amended and specific funding made available to counteract the problems of graffiti and vandalism in the worst affected areas of the Borough. This has led to the introduction single nameplates installed at a high level on a separate post at each end of the street. These have proved effective and popular both in terms of visibility and improved appearance of the street scene.

#### *Public toilets*

There are some public toilets in Wimbledon. These are maintained and managed by Centre Court as part of the S106 agreement, which was agreed as part of the development of the shopping centre. This model may be a way forward for the provision of public toilet facilities in town centres.

#### *Flowerbeds*

The group found empty or badly maintained flowerbeds in the Borough. The group discussed if people doing community hours could maintain flowers. In Epsom, flowerbeds in the middle of roads are sponsored by local companies. Because they are in the middle of the road they are generally left alone and not vandalised. The task group would encourage the possibility of sponsorship from retail outlets. Cllr Alambritis has written to Tesco in Mitcham to see if they would be interested in sponsoring the flowerbed outside their shop. They have responded and given the name of a person who will be contacted.

#### *A-boards*

A-boards should be licensed (charge), but few are. Many of the existing A-boards are not on council land but on private ground – often the first metre or two next to the house – in which case the council cannot do anything about the boards.

The rights of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA), part III, Access to Goods and Services, will be extended in October 2004. Service providers already have some responsibilities, but from October these duties will be significantly extended. Service providers will have to address physical features which make it unreasonably difficult for disabled people to use their services and the Disability Rights Commission will be running a major campaign to highlight these duties. The group encourages the council to use this campaign and law to reach out to and put pressure on shopkeepers to use A-boards more sensibly. The group also noted that there is a difference between a local trader advertising his services and putting out a board to market a nationwide service. The group recommends that the council distinguishes between them.

## **2.5 The Street Design Guide**

The new Merton Street Design Guide is currently being produced. The document is intended to be a manual primarily for use by officers when planning any schemes that are likely to have an impact on the overall street scene. It is anticipated that member level approval to the document will be sought once it has been finalised.

The task group welcomes and supports the introduction of the Street Design Guide. It examines most of the items that the group has identified and will provide important help for smarter, clutter-free streets in the future.

## **3.0 Recommendations for smarter, clutter-free streets in Merton**

The group recommends that

1. pavement parking is enforced more effectively and that a letter should be sent out to all local residents in the areas concerned stating that there will be enforcement of pavement parking in the future.
2. new full-time Town Centre Managers are appointed as soon as possible to increase the awareness of cluttered streets and to provide links between the council and the respective areas. TCMs are often a driving force for an area.
3. street furniture should be inspected by the highway team and repaired/taken away. One way of making sure street furniture is inspected on a regular basis might be to involve members of the street watch scheme.
4. flowerbeds should be removed when they do become unsightly as result of extensive vandalism but that consideration be given to assistance from residents who are assigned community social orders and also possibly sponsorship from local shops etc.
5. street furniture and litterbins are gradually standardised and a consistent colour coding is enforced across the Borough to ensure branding. This should be done when street furniture is exchanged naturally and not as a one-off.
6. rubbish bags (next to litter-bins) are removed as soon as possible from pavements – they are a hazard to disabled people.
7. a hotline number to the council is printed on litter-bins so that anyone can easily report a bin that needs emptying or rubbish bags that need to be picked up. Bins should be individually numbered to ease reporting.
8. new developments should follow the best practice included in the Street Design Guide. Some of the existing problems could be avoided if these issues were considered when an area is planned, but are expensive to take care of afterwards, e.g. maintenance of flowerbeds and need for railings.
9. rules regarding A-boards are enforced; that a cleverer, smarter and more sensitive use of A-boards is encouraged and that the council uses the new DDA to reach out to and put pressure on shopkeepers to use A-boards

- more sensibly. The group also recommends that the council distinguishes between local and national A-boards.
10. rules regarding unauthorised advertising are enforced.
  11. the best practice described in this report is followed and that council employees work to set examples when it comes to maintenance work within the Borough so that all equipment is removed as soon as possible (e.g. ladders and street cones).
  12. checks regarding uneven pavements are enforced, especially in town centres and shopping parades.
  13. a consistent signage policy is adopted and that signs are put up on the same post as far as possible.
  14. checks for contradictory signs are carried out when a new sign is set up.
  15. signs are put up higher than today so that high vehicles do not block them.
  16. road signs are consistent so that one type of street sign is used across the Borough.

### **3.1 Conclusion**

This report has reviewed smarter, clutter-free streets – so safer streets and design of street environment and presented a number of recommendations to improve the streets to make them more accessible for all.

### **Appendix 1: Terms of Reference**

This review might look at things such as:

1. stopping shops putting out 'A' boards in front of their shops ('A-boards' are the double-sided advertisement boards that in profile resemble the letter A)
2. removing illegal unauthorized advertising signs and similar obstructions as well as vehicles for sale
3. putting up one post with three signs on rather than three posts with a sign each
4. better design of street furniture
5. replacing street furniture (such as rubbish bins) with smart, black and gold 'traditional' bins - as they need replacing
6. encouraging businesses to bring back traditional heritage shop-fronts rather than big, plastic illuminated signs
7. encouraging sponsorship schemes for hanging baskets, roundabouts or flower beds
8. use of art and creative lighting in public places
9. smart and high-quality paving (street-cleaning machines are heavy and sometimes ruin the paving of streets)
10. looking into estate agents' use of public spaces (pavements) for signs (signs may be attached to fences, but are really on the pavement)
11. how to avoid cars parking on the pavements
12. goods displayed outside shops – nuisance or nice?



## Appendix 2: Organisations and people contacted for this review

Age Concern Merton NE  
All Saints Pensioner's Club NE  
Asian Elderly Group of Merton  
Care and Repair - Merton  
Carers Support Merton  
Civil Service Retirement Fellowship  
Friends in St Helier (fish)  
Gladstone Day Centre  
Guild House Club  
Hanover Housing Association  
Honora Medical Services  
Hospitality Action  
Merton & Morden Guild of Social Service  
Merton African-Caribbean Organisation (Maco)  
Merton Association of Pensioners  
Merton Goan Senior Citizens Assn  
Merton Harp (Hearing Aid Remedial Project)  
Merton Involve  
Merton Mind  
Merton - Elderly Services  
Merton Volunteer Bureau - Help Service  
Millat Asian Housing Association  
Phipps Bridge Senior Citizens' Club  
Salvation Army Over 60's Club - Wimbledon  
Silver Thread Club  
St. Mary the Virgin, Merton Park - visiting scheme  
The New Bridges Club  
Umbrella Club  
W R V S. Darby & Joan Club - Mitcham  
Wednesday Club - Senior Citizens  
Wimbledon Guild  
Wimbledon Retirement Association  
Assn of Spina Bifida & Hydrocephalus  
Atlantis Swimming Club  
Cherrywood Social Club  
Disability Alliance  
Disabled People's Counselling  
Dolphin Swimming Club for the Disabled  
Mascot Community Careline Service  
Merton Association for Disabled People  
Merton Crossroads Caring for Carers  
Merton Deaf Club  
Merton Hard of Hearing Group  
Merton Hard of Hearing Resource Centre  
Merton Phab Club  
Merton Sports & Social Club for the Blind  
Merton Talking Newspaper  
Merton Toy Library

Merton Voluntary Association for the Blind  
Multiple Sclerosis Society - Merton Branch  
Smash - Sutton & Merton Aphasia Self Help Group  
Stroke Assn Dysphasia Support - Merton & Sutton  
Wandsworth Rathbone  
African Community Involvement Assn. (ACIA)  
African Culture Promotions (ACP)  
Ahmadiyya Muslim Association  
Asian Diabetic Support & Awareness Group  
Asylum Welcome  
Bengali Association of Merton  
British Muslim Association of Merton  
Christian Care  
Citizens Advice Bureau - Immigration Service  
Ethnic Minority Centre  
Irish Association South London  
London Oriel Cultural & Social Club  
London South West Chinese Community Assn  
Merton Asian Women's Association  
Merton Churches Asylum Seekers' Support Group  
Merton Oasis Project  
Merton Racial Equality Partnership  
Merton Sickle Cell and Thalassaemia Group  
Merton Somali Community (Mesco)  
Pakistan Welfare Association (UK)  
Pearl of Africa Foundation (PAF)  
South London Congolese Assn  
South London Tamil Welfare Group  
UK Women's Assn for the promotion of Urdu language  
Unity Network  
Arabic School in Wimbledon  
Connexions - Prospects  
Connexions South London Partnership (Merton)  
Duke of Edinburgh's Award  
Merton Volunteer Bureau  
Merton Youth Awareness Programme  
Merton Youth Matters  
Merton Youth Offending Team  
Merton Youth Service  
Morden Girls' league  
Morden Little League Football  
St Christopher's Fellowship  
YMCA - Wimbledon and District

Merton Chamber of Commerce, Diana Sterck, Chief Executive  
Mike Smith, representative of Mitcham's scheme of shopkeepers  
Representatives of the Federation of Small Businesses: Mark Brett M C Home Entertainment; N Tarling, Woods Jewellers; Colin Cooley, Peter Townsend (Paints) Ltd; Henry Sidwell Rosewell Properties Ltd, all of Morden.