

Merton Council - call-in request form (PUBLIC VERSION)

1. Decision to be called in: (required)

Harris Wimbledon Secondary School – Required Site Approvals

2. Which of the principles of decision making in Article 13 of the constitution has not been applied? (required)

Required by part 4E Section 16(c)(a)(ii) of the constitution - tick all that apply:

(a) proportionality (i.e. the action must be proportionate to the desired outcome);	
(b) due consultation and the taking of professional advice from officers;	X
(c) respect for human rights and equalities;	X
(d) a presumption in favour of openness;	X
(e) clarity of aims and desired outcomes;	
(f) consideration and evaluation of alternatives;	X
(g) irrelevant matters must be ignored.	

3. Desired outcome

Part 4E Section 16(f) of the constitution- select one:

(a) The Panel/Commission to refer the decision back to the decision making person or body for reconsideration, setting out in writing the nature of its concerns.	X
(b) To refer the matter to full Council where the Commission/Panel determines that the decision is contrary to the Policy and/or Budget Framework	
(c) The Panel/Commission to decide not to refer the matter back to the decision making person or body *	
* If you select (c) please explain the purpose of calling in the decision.	



4. Evidence which demonstrates the alleged breach(es) indicated in 2 above (required)

Required by part 4E Section 16(c)(a)(ii) of the constitution:

(b) due consultation and the taking of professional advice from officers;

We – the signatories - understand that various elements of this decision have been commercially sensitive, However there has been no attempt to consult on either the type of school that would work or the type of location that would work. There has been no consultation on the provision from the curriculum that is deemed to be important and what is not deemed important in delivery of a new secondary school.

To date there has been no input from future pupils on the school that they will attend. We can also find no evidence that teachers or parents have been consulted. Finally there is no evidence that the community immediately around the proposed site has been consulted or is even aware of the proposals.

Much of this consultation could have been undertaken notwithstanding the commercial sensitivity of the precise site.

Whilst we understand and respect the right of officers and Cabinet members to allow them to have dialogue to reach a decision, once the governors of schools have been involved then at that point other councillors should be informed. This did not however happen.

(c) respect for human rights and equalities;

We are concerned there could be limitations on the pupils' education at this new school because of the site.

More work needs to be done to verify that a truly equal education can be provided to pupils in this school when compared to other secondary schools in Merton.

This new school will be approximately one quarter the size of other Merton schools, the lack of outdoor playing fields may curtail exercise, sports, fresh air and social interaction. PE and sports are increasingly a valuable part of the curriculum with health and social benefits e.g. in tackling obesity

as well as self esteem benefits for young people.

More work needs to be done to ensure the safety of the new site.

(d) a presumption in favour of openness;

We don't think the administration would dispute the fact that there has been significant secrecy around this issue. Whilst we accept that some of that has been required, we do not believe it has been required to the degree that has happened and therefore we do not believe there has been a full presumption of openness.

The point when governors of schools are being told of plans should definitely be the point at which Opposition councillors become involved (see points under (b))

(f) consideration and evaluation of alternatives;

The council and Capita themselves identified two sites which it was felt were suitable as secondary schools: the Chaucer/SMART Centre site and the Melrose/Worsfold House site. It is accepted that these sites would not have had nearly as many issues associated with provision of education and delivery of the full curriculum and, albeit not in Wimbledon, are in our view more suitable than the currently proposed site, especially as they do not require purchases from third parties which would have allowed fuller consultation and more openness.

There are a number of primary school sites in the borough listed in the report which are the same size or a similar size to our secondary schools. We cannot see any evidence at all that serious thought has been given to a 'through school' and, when asked at the Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel meeting on 29th June 2016, Cabinet Members appeared unable to engage on this issue. It is still unclear whether this has been considered and/or whether there is an administration policy either in favour or against 'through schools' which of course are popular in some parts of the country.

In summary, we do favour a Wimbledon school and indeed the previous Conservative administration had plans for a new Wimbledon primary school. However, it is important that this school is on the correct location which is safe, can deliver the full curriculum and is not detrimental to other organisations and schools.

5. Documents requested

All papers provided to the Director of Children , Schools and Families/Director of Environment and Regeneration/Director of Corporate Services and relevant Cabinet Members prior to, during and subsequent to the decision making process on the site of the new secondary school.

All emails, reports and associated documentation relating to the decision on the new secondary school provided to the relevant Cabinet Members, Leader of the Council, Chief Executive, Director of Children, Schools and Families, Director of Environment and Regeneration, Director of Corporate Services and other council officers.

Meeting notes of all meetings between officers / Cabinet Members and the relevant stakeholders (listed in exempt document) and any correspondence received from those organisations.

Any papers/correspondence/reports/analysis to do with safety in the roads around the proposed site..

The Equality Impact Assessment (or any other equalities analysis carried out) in relation to proposed sites affected in the Cabinet report.

Any papers to do with the ability of the new school to deliver the full curriculum to its future pupils, especially sports, PE and outside play.

6. Witnesses requested

Cllr Caroline Cooper-Marbiah, Cabinet Member for Education

Cllr Martin Whelton, former Cabinet Member for Education

Peter Walker, former Cabinet member for Education

Merton Council officers responsible for ensuring the curriculum can be delivered at the new school

7. Signed (not required if sent by email):

Cllr James Holmes

Cllr Adam Bush

Cllr Linda Taylor