

Merton Council is planning to build a secondary school for 1,100 pupils on a site identified by the Mayor of London as one of the most polluted school sites in London

Merton Council plans to build a secondary school for 1,100 pupils on a site identified by the Mayor of London as one of the fifty most polluted school sites in London.

That site is described by Merton Council as "where pollution levels are amongst the highest in the borough". Planning permission to build the school is likely to go before the Planning Committee of Merton Council in October 2018.

The site consists of part of Merton Abbey Primary School's playing field and land adjacent, at 59-63 High Path, South Wimbledon, SW19 2JY.

As both the Mayor's Report and the Merton Council Report point out, building a secondary school at this location will pose a serious threat to the health

"Poor air quality is a major public health issue and cause of inequality in our city. It is shocking that in London alone, air pollution contributes to thousands of early deaths every year..."

"... there are proposals for a new secondary school – the 'Harris cademy Wimbledon Secondary School' directly east of the primary school. This will replace the existing community centre, business and church next to the school, and also take some of Merton Abbey Primary School's field. The head teacher is very concerned about the impact that the additional school on High Path will have on the transport network and air quality."

"Pupils are exposed to polluted streets while walking to/from the school. Walking along the Morden Road and Merantun Way in particular should be avoided as much as is possible, though the current layout of the highways may make this difficult."

(Above extracts from: *The Mayor of London's School Air Quality Audit Programme Merton Abbey Primary School*" - May 2018)

Key observations – summary of issues (from: *The Mayor of London’s School Air Quality Audit Programme Merton Abbey Primary School”- May 2018)*

- “New secondary school: demolition and construction work resulting in increased traffic on High Path and therefore increased emissions. In addition a reduction in outside space for Merton Abbey School.”
- “Regeneration of High Path estate: extensive demolition and construction planned over the next ten to twelve years resulting in an estate with twice as many bedrooms and parking spaces therefore increasing traffic and emissions on the High Path.”
- “High Path drop-off/pick-up period: as this road is narrow, with high vehicle flow, traffic can back up from Morden Road during drop-off/pick-up period. Cars stopping on High Path can cause road safety and idling issues. This activity is a source of emissions and being outside the school at peak times is also an exposure hotspot.”

The quote below is taken from: ***London Borough of Merton Air Quality Annual Status Report for 2017 published: 25 May 2018.***

“In 2017 we provided an Air Quality Information Day at Merton Abbey School where pollution levels are amongst the highest in the borough”

Merton commissioned a report (July 2013) which identified other sites in the Borough where the school could be sited. A number of these they own and are sited in Mitcham, where the majority of secondary school aged pupils live. (Wimbledon has five secondary schools while Mitcham has only three)

Please write to one or all of those below urging them to persuade Merton Council to halt the plans to build a school at this pollution hotspot.

Write if possible by post as it is likely to be acknowledged or e-mail to:

- **Sadiq Khan** ,City Hall The Queen’s Walk More London London SE1 2AA
sadiq.khan@london.gov.uk
- **Leonie Cooper** AM, GLA Member for Merton & Wandsworth, City Hall
The Queen’s Walk More London London SE1 2AA
leonie.cooper@london.gov.uk
- **Councillor Linda Kirby**, Chair of Planning, London Borough of Merton
Civic Centre, London Rd, Morden SM4 5DX linda.kirby@merton.gov.uk