



## **Merton CIL's response to The London Borough of Merton's consultation on local toilet provision.**

March 2023

### **Please tell us how you would rate public toilet provision in Merton?**

Merton CIL and its members would like to see more accessible toilet facilities across the borough. Toilet provision in the East is worse than in the West. There are only three Changing Places facilities across the borough and Merton CIL are keen to see Changing Places facilities installed in the civic centre, community spaces like Vestry Hall, and all local leisure centres in particular.

### **How often do you consider the availability of public toilets where you are going in Merton before leaving home?**

Merton CIL members have fed back that it is a regular occurrence to consider the availability of public toilets before leaving home. One member has said:

**"Using a mobility scooter can limit my access to public toilets. I must plan carefully where to go and how long I can stay out."**

For some Disabled people, health implications of a lack of accessible toilets are significant. A Merton CIL member shared that managing their condition is reliant upon an intake of over 2 litres of water each day.

However, when they have plans to leave their home, they have to limit their fluid intake to avoid having to use public toilets.

**If someone were to ask directions to the nearest public toilet in your local area, how confident of its location would you be?**

Mitcham, Morden & Raynes Park – Not confident at all

Wimbledon & Colliers Wood – Quite Confident

**If you needed one, could you find a suitable toilet in the following town centres?**

Wimbledon

Merton CIL would like to see more fully accessible toilet spaces in Wimbledon but recognise the provision is better than in many other locations across the borough. One member felt that Elys was a good location for toilets, but another member felt that the lift was too small for mobility scooters. Merton CIL are also excited by the plans to have more accessible facilities for Disabled people in the regeneration of Centre Court.



Wimbledon Village

We do not know of any accessible toilet space in Wimbledon Village. There is a changing places facility in AELTC but it is not accessible to the wider community.

Photo: Estifanos & Pippa at Metronome/Crown Lane Studios with their accessible toilet & hoist.

Morden

We recognise that there is a Changing Places facility in Morden Leisure centre, but this is quite a distance from

the town centre. Metronome has an accessible toilet with a hoist, which is a good example of what small businesses could do to ensure their facilities are accessible. Merton CIL would like to see a Changing Places facility installed in the civic centre.

## Mitcham

Merton CIL members felt the public toilet provision in Mitcham was 'terrible' and this has been made even worse with the closure of Morrisons. A Merton CIL member wrote a poem about their experience of public toilets in Mitcham.

**Image: Poem about toilet provision in Mitcham by Merton CIL member**

## Raynes Park

Merton CIL members felt that they would not be able to find an accessible toilet in Raynes Park town centre.

## Colliers Wood

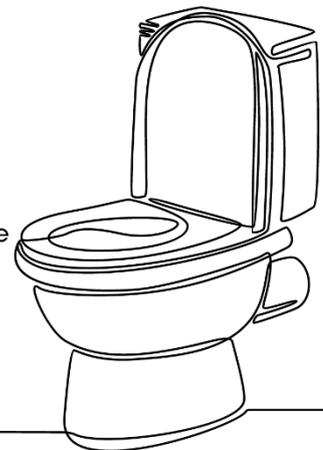
Merton CIL members felt the provision for toilets in Colliers Wood was good. They shared that the Starbucks/M&S has good toilet facilities and points which can be used charging electric wheelchairs and mobility scooters.

## IF YOU WERE ME...

If you were me,  
What would you do?  
I'm on a scooter  
But I'm just like you!  
I fill my bladder  
And I need the loo  
I watch my intake  
Not to require no 1 or 2  
Because of you  
I struggle to get through

Mitcham Sibthorpe road  
Disabled access you say  
Toilet is filthy  
And so dark and grey  
The Door is a pull  
So I have to wait all day  
To Ask for help  
It takes my independence  
away

**Poem by  
A Merton CIL member**



**How confident would you feel going into each of the following where you are not a paying customer, and asking to use the toilets?**

Merton CIL members shared views that they were not confident that all accessible toilet spaces were fully accessible. Some public toilets have been labelled accessible but have a grab rail only. Some café's also require an entry code on receipt to access toilet, which can feel like an unhelpful barrier. Some people also feel obliged to buy something if they use the toilet.

**Thinking about information available to help people locate toilets in Merton, which of the following would be the best two ways to communicate that information?**

Accessible information in a variety of forms – Easy to read & accessible signs in community spaces could be useful.

**Please tell us if an improvement in public toilet provision would make you more likely to visit shops, cafes or other businesses in Merton?**

The total spending power of families with at least 1 Disabled person is estimated at £274 billion a year (Scope). Ensuring accessible toilets are available in town centres will promote engagement with the local community, build diverse customer bases for local businesses and make Merton a positive example for inclusivity.

**Other comments:**

There is limited awareness around community toilet facilities in Merton.

Disabled people already face a higher cost of living. We would not like to see the introduction of paid accessible facilities in Merton.

Some Disabled people require support when using toilet facilities and accessible toilets within gendered toilet spaces can cause embarrassment if the Disabled person and carer are of different genders.

Accessible toilets can often be left dirty, or used as baby changing facilities or storage places, which is unacceptable.

Toilet facilities at train stations needs to be improved.