
OPEN LETTER

30 July 2026

Councillor Eleanor Stringer
Councillor Stuart Neaverson
Merton Council

Dear Cllr Stringer, Cllr Neaverson,

A number of residents have been in touch with us about how filthy our town centre pavements have become over the last few weeks.

We were disappointed to find that your administration's response to questions about the plans to keep our pavements clean is:

"pavement washing is not mandated, nor is it identified as a required technique or necessary for meeting Section 89 duties under the Environmental Protection Act"

Civic pride means more than managing down to the minimum statutory grade for litter and detritus. It means a visible, reliable standard for the public realm in our busy town centres.

We recognise that not all town centre pavements are public highway, and the constraints of cost, water use, run-off, disruption and noise.

Those constraints do not, however, absolve the Council of responsibility for keeping our streets clean, nor do they justify the absence of a clear strategy that combines:

- regular, scheduled deep cleaning or targeted washing of priority public pavements in town centres;
- robust, visible enforcement against businesses whose waste disposal practices repeatedly soil the public realm;
- transparent reporting of what is being cleaned, how often, and to what standard; and
- proper coordination with private landowners so that the overall appearance of the town centre improves rather than remaining fragmented.

We therefore ask you to:

1. Publish a clear plan for the ongoing maintenance and cleaning of public pavements in high-footfall centres, like Wimbledon town centre, including any role for jet washing or equivalent deep-cleaning methods beyond current limited trials.
2. Provide the detail of the outcome of enforcement actions against commercial waste practices that stain public pavements.
3. Explain how the Council will use its convening power and existing partnerships to work with private landowners so that the overall cleanliness of town centre areas is improved.
4. Provide regular, transparent updates on cleaning frequencies, methods and outcomes for town-centre public highway so that residents can judge progress against the Council's own civic-pride and cleaner-streets commitments.

We note there are to be some trial washes, but leaving Merton's pavements reliant on occasional project-funded washes is not consistent with the priorities your administration claims to hold.

We look forward to a substantive reply and to seeing a proper plan put in place.

Yours sincerely,

Merton Liberal Democrats

On behalf of the Liberal Democrat Group on Merton Council